

OMAN

دَائِلِي

Observer

MATCHA CRAZE SWEEPS OMAN AND BEYOND

ONCE

Matcha craze sweeps Oman and beyond

Matcha, a type of green tea, has become a popular drink in Oman and beyond. It is known for its health benefits and is often used in smoothies and desserts. The drink is made by whisking green tea powder with water or milk. It is a popular choice for those looking for a healthy and refreshing beverage.

VOL. 44, NO. 312

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SUNRISE 05:55 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04:40 AM

DHUHR 12:05 PM

ASR 03:31 PM

MAGHRIB 06:10 PM

ISHA 07:20 PM

SHORT TAKES

HM’S GREETINGS TO ARMENIA, MALTA AND BELIZE

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent cables of greetings to President Vahagn Khachaturyan of the Republic of Armenia, President Myriam Spiteri Debon of the Republic of Malta and Governor-General of Belize Froyla Tzalam on the occasion of their countries’ Independence Anniversary. His Majesty expressed his sincere wishes to the leaders of these friendly countries for further achievements at all levels to meet the aspirations of their peoples. His Majesty expressed his hope that the relations of cooperation and partnership would further develop to serve the mutual interests and benefits.

HM’S GREETINGS TO GEORGIAN PRESIDENT



President Mikheil Kavelashvili of the Republic of Georgia received Ambassador Saif bin Rashid al Jahwari, who presented his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to Georgia, in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, on Saturday. The ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Georgian president, along with his wishes of good health and happiness to him and continued progress and prosperity for the friendly Georgian people. The Georgian President asked the ambassador to convey his greetings and his wishes of good health and well-being to His Majesty, and continued progress and prosperity for the Omani people.

OCA SECURES LAND FOR NEW BUILDING

The Oman Cancer Association (OCA) has received a plot of land to construct a brand-new state-of-the-art building, which is estimated to cost around RO 7 million. The association is one of the most widely renowned non-governmental and non-profit charities in the region, with the aim of providing better odds for children battling cancer. The OCA offers free accommodation for all Omani and non-Omani children and three of their family members who reside outside Muscat, along with three full meals daily and complimentary rides to the hospitals where they receive their treatments. With the growing demand and success of the organisation, the addition of more resources and a larger space was found to be necessary. SEE P5

Pavilion highlights Oman’s achievements

S a y y i d B i l a r a b p r e s i d e s o v e r c e l e b r a t i o n o f O m a n ’ s N a t i o n a l D a y

ASSIGNED by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, Honorary President of the ‘Programme of Promising Omani Startups’ (POPS), on Saturday, headed the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation participating in the celebration of the Sultanate of Oman’s National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai, Pavilion in Japan. HH Sayyid Bilarab was received upon his arrival at the expo by Ito Yoshitaka, Minister for the World Expo 2025, beside a number of Japanese government officials. HH Sayyid Bilarab then signed the VIP guest book for Expo 2025 Osaka. A ceremony was held at the Yumeishiya Hall for HH Sayyid Bilarab during which he enjoyed traditional Japanese tea.

The ceremony began with the raising of the flag of the Sultanate of Oman in the main exhibition hall and the playing of the national anthems of the Sultanate of Oman and Japan. In his speech, Ito Yoshitaka stressed the strong relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Japan, reviewing the shared history and areas of bilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries. He highlighted the importance of the corners and sections of the Sultanate of Oman’s Pavilion, themed ‘Earth, Water, and Humanity’ which showcases a future society where humanity lives in harmony with nature. Sayyid Said bin Sultan al



HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, on Saturday, headed the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation participating in the celebration of the Sultanate of Oman’s National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai.

Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, (Commissioner-General of the Sultanate of Oman’s Pavilion at Expo 2020), emphasised that the Sultanate of Oman’s presence highlights the achievements the country has made in its blessed and renewed renaissance, which has focused on strengthening ties with all nations supported by a rich history of tolerance and cultural interaction. He said that this interaction

draws its spirit from water, land and humanity, allowing Omanis to cross land and sea and share their identity, culture and values of peace with other peoples, while opening up to the cultures of the world and adding to their cultural heritage. Al Busaidy pointed out that the design of the Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion at the Expo 2025 Japan is the fruit of Omani youth creativity being one of the winning projects of the Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for

Architectural Design. He added, “The Sultanate of Oman’s participation at Expo 2025 Japan represents an opportunity to introduce Omani culture to the peoples of the world and extend bridges of communication between us and them through human interaction. The Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion at the expo also offers an interactive space that welcomes everyone and is rich in information and experiences.” TURN TO P2

Israeli strikes kill 34 in Gaza offensive

GAZA CITY: Israel’s military kept up its assault on Gaza City and the wider Gaza Strip on Saturday, killing 34 Palestinians, according to Gazan health authorities. The assault came as 10 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Britain and Canada, are scheduled to formally recognise an independent Palestinian state on Monday, ahead of the annual leaders’ gathering at the UN General Assembly. Israel’s intensified military demolition

campaign targeting high-rise buildings in Gaza City began last week alongside a ground assault. Its forces, which control Gaza City’s eastern suburbs, have in recent days been pounding the Sheikh Radwan and Tel Al-Hawa areas from where they would be positioned to advance on central and western parts of the city. The military estimates that it has demolished up to 20 Gaza City tower blocks over the past two weeks. — Reuters

Passengers stranded as cyberattack hits European airports

LONDON: Major European airports, including Brussels, Berlin and London’s Heathrow, were on Saturday hit by a cyberattack on check-in systems that caused cancellations and long delays for thousands of passengers. Dublin and Cork airports in Ireland were also affected, Dublin airport said on X, adding that it was experiencing “minor impacts” from “a Europe-wide software issue”. According to aviation watchdog Eurocontrol, the airports were “reporting disruptions in IT systems

related to passenger handling.” At least 10 flights were cancelled out of Brussels Airport and another 17 were delayed by over an hour after the system was hit by a “cyberattack” late on Friday, the airport said. “We have become aware of a cyber-related disruption to our MUSE software in select airports,” airport service provider Collins Aerospace said. “The impact is limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop,” added Collins Aerospace, which says it has a presence in 170



The lettering ‘Goodbye Berlin’ is seen on a board as a passenger carrying a backpack walks at Terminal 1 of Berlin on Saturday. — AFP

airports globally. Brussels Airport said the attack was still having a “large impact” on flight schedules on Saturday. “In terms of information, it’s really not good at all, people are waiting, people don’t know,” Nancy Steiner, 53, said while surveying the long queues of passengers at Brussels airport. Airlines had been asked to cancel half their flights to and from Brussels between 0400 GMT on Saturday and 0200 GMT on Monday because of the attack, Eurocontrol said. AFPTV reporters filmed

large queues at Brussels as passengers anxiously monitored announcement boards showing many flight delays. London’s Heathrow Airport — the busiest in Europe — said its check-in and boarding systems, also provided by Collins Aerospace, were hit by a “technical issue” that “may cause delays for departing passengers”. “They didn’t tell us anything. It’s always crowded here, but today is like extra,” said a 41-year-old architect waiting at Heathrow, who gave her first name as Rowan. —AFP

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Pavilion highlights achievements of renewed renaissance

FROM P1

The Royal Cavalry Band performed a musical piece that embodied the global affinity that characterises Expo as well as traditional pieces titled Crown of Loyalty, My Lord, the Sultan, the Omani Gazelle.

HH Sayyid Bilarab later toured the Sultanate of Oman's pavilion, passing through the Water Corridor, which serves as a link between the

indoor exhibition halls and the outdoor space of the pavilion. He watched a visual presentation in the Land and Water Hall, depicting the birth of natural life forms in the Sultanate of Oman through the confluence of water and land. The presentation also highlighted the impact of these natural life forms, represented by the flora and fauna of the Sultanate of Oman's rich environment.

At the end of the ceremony, HH Sayyid Bilarab exchanged commemorative gifts and was presented with a commemorative gift from the Japanese government, delivered to him by Ito Yoshitaka, Minister for the World Expo 2025.

The event was attended by a number of Their Excellencies and officials from both the Omani and Japanese sides, as well as several sisterly and friendly countries.

As part of his visit to the expo, HH Sayyid Bilarab and his accompanying delegation visited the Japan Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka where he was received by Noriyuki Kuroda, Director of the Japanese Pavilion. He listened to a brief explanation of the Japanese Pavilion model and its design. He then toured the pavilion's sections: the Land, the Farm, and the Factory, learning about the pavilion's content and the displays

and experiences it offers that reflect Japan's identity. At the conclusion of the tour of the Japanese Pavilion, HH Sayyid Bilarab signed the pavilion's VIP guest book. Over one million visitors have visited the Sultanate of Oman's Pavilion at Expo 2025 Japan. They learned about the story of the Omani Pavilion, reflecting the experience the country has witnessed throughout history and its messages. — ONA



Postage stamp issued to mark Oman's participation in Expo

OSAKA: A commemorative postage stamp marking the Sultanate of Oman's participation in Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, was launched under the auspices of Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Vice-Chairman of the Supervisory Committee for the Sultanate of Oman's Participation in Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

The launch of the postage stamp underscores the Oman Post's pioneering role in preserving the national memory and documenting the Sultanate of Oman's civilisational and cultural endeavours.

The Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion said, "The postage stamp is in a denomination of 300 baisas and is limited to 5,000 copies. In addition, 3,000 accompanying commemorative cards were issued."

He added, "The 5 x 4 cm stamp was designed to balance aesthetics with precision. It was produced using offset printing technology, which highlighted the colours and symbols. The printing was entrusted to Cartor Security Printing in France, one of the world's leading institutions specialising in security printing."

The launch received significant official, diplomatic and media attention, with attendees praising the value of the issue as a qualitative addition to the global stamp library and a reflection of the Sultanate of Oman's image, which combines authenticity and modernity. The launch ceremony was attended by Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Commissioner General of the Sultanate of Oman's Participation in Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and a number of officials. — ONA





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SHORTTAKES



The career day initiative featured an exhibition with three interactive corners

SALALAH HOSTS ‘CHILDREN’S CAREER DAY’ TO INSPIRE FUTURE LEADERS

SALALAH: The ‘Children’s Career Day’ initiative was held at the Sultan Qaboos Culture and Entertainment Complex in Salalah, introducing children to various professions and encouraging them to explore their interests and future career paths.

Nour bint Mohammed al Awad, head of the initiative’s team, said the programme aims to discover the talents of children who will become tomorrow’s leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators. The event targeted 100 children through a mix of awareness-raising and recreational activities designed to develop skills and foster a sense of care and inclusion.

Organised by Nano Digital in collaboration with the General-Directorate of Social Development in Dhofar Governorate, the initiative featured an exhibition with interactive corners: the Health Corner showcased nurses, doctors and paramedics; the Homeland Protectors Corner simulated firefighting and rescue operations; and the Science Corner offered experiments and mini-sessions in agriculture, astronomy and space.

The Media and Creativity Corner allowed children to present news bulletins, conduct mini-interviews and explore drawing and fine arts. The Entrepreneurship Corner highlighted simplified success stories to encourage ambition, alongside a visual presentation of the Orphan Sponsorship Programme and a panel discussion on supporting children to build confidence and envision their future positively. — ONA

CYBERSECURITY CONTEST IN MANAH EMPOWERS YOUNG TALENT



MANAH: The ‘Soor’ Cybersecurity Competition kicked off at the Oman Across Ages Museum, drawing 120 participants from across Oman.

The event aims to boost cyber awareness and sharpen participants’ skills in tackling modern digital challenges through hands-on competitions that replicate real-world cyber scenarios.

Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, highlighted the competition as a pioneering national platform to empower young Omani talent. He noted it provides an opportunity for participants to demonstrate their abilities in confronting digital threats in a realistic cyber environment.

He added that the competition encourages the safe and responsible use of technology, while fostering a generation capable of safeguarding national cyberspace and adapting effectively to rapid digital advancements. The expected outcomes, he said, will help establish a strong foundation of national expertise supporting Oman’s digital transformation and innovation goals. — ONA

RECOFI ADOPTS NEW FISHERIES MEASURES

SALALAH: The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) concluded its 13th session in Salalah, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman through the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The meeting produced a series of recommendations and resolutions to strengthen the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors across the region.

Among the key outcomes were the development of a new regional website to serve as a database and information hub for member states,



and the integration of climate change considerations into national aquaculture programmes and plans.

The commission also recommended establishing national liaison points to combat illegal fishing, updating research templates for priority species and enhancing

participation in the regional scientific review expert team.

The session further called for greater institutional cooperation between regional and international organisations to safeguard fish resources.

In recognition of his contributions to advancing the marine fisheries sector, Dr Abdulaziz bin Said al Marzouqi, Director-General of Fisheries Resources Development at Oman’s Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, was elected as the new RECOFI Chairman. — ONA

Oman launches human trafficking awareness drive

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 20

OMAN continues to intensify its efforts to combat human trafficking, positioning itself as one of the countries that has given significant attention to tackling this crime through strong legislation, preventive measures and awareness programmes.

In line with this commitment, the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, in cooperation with the General Federation of Oman Trade Unions, organised an awareness programme for five-star hotel management staff. The initiative aimed to educate hotel employees on the different forms of human trafficking — such as sexual exploitation, forced labour and child exploitation — as well as to provide tools for early detection and reporting. This comes as part of the annual training plan designed to enhance prevention and strengthen community awareness.

The Committee stressed that Oman’s approach relies on a comprehensive framework of awareness, training, law enforcement and victim protection. Campaigns are being launched in multiple languages to reach vulnerable groups, with



Specialised anti-human trafficking units have been established within ROP and other ministries to ensure effective legal action

messages disseminated through media, schools and civil society platforms.

As part of its preventive measures, the Ministry of Education has also issued guidelines and awareness materials, including a dedicated guide for schools to detect and address child abuse cases. Oman further reinforces its fight through regional and international cooperation, ensuring

effective coordination across agencies.

The Sultanate of Oman has adopted several national strategies, most notably the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, issued every three years, which builds on recommendations from national and international reports. These efforts are underpinned by the Anti-Human Trafficking Law (Royal Decree No 78/2025), which prescribes strict penalties — ranging from three to ten years’ imprisonment and fines between RO 5,000 and RO 100,000 — for perpetrators of trafficking.

Specialised anti-human trafficking units have been established within the Royal Oman Police, the Public Prosecution, the Foreign Ministry and The Ministry of Labour to ensure effective legal action.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Law represents a pioneering legal and humanitarian step, as it establishes a strict framework for penalties that criminalise various forms of human exploitation, in line with international standards for the protection of human rights.

Civil society institutions are also engaged in awareness campaigns, contributing to a wider national movement against this crime that threatens human dignity and societal security.

New Al Yasmeen Park in Al Suwaiq set to become a modern community bub

SIHAM AL SAIDI
AL SUWAIQ, SEPT 20

The development of Al Yasmeen Park, a modern recreational project in Al Suwaiq, is nearing completion with landscaping and installation works currently underway.

Spanning 19,000 square metres, the park is designed to provide residents with a safe, family-friendly space for sports, relaxation and social interaction, while also promoting healthier lifestyles and enhancing the area’s urban landscape.

Implemented in three phases, the project has already completed its first stage, which included the installation of irrigation systems with a 30,000-gallon underground tank, electrical works, lighting poles and paved walkways with interlock tiles and gravel.

The ongoing second phase focuses on tree planting and drilling a well to secure water resources, with work expected to continue until the end of 2025. The third and final phase will introduce recreational facilities such as children’s play areas, outdoor fitness stations, rubber flooring and waste bins, also slated for completion by late 2025.

Eng Waleed al Nabhani, Director of



The park will provide families with a vibrant place to promote healthier lifestyles and enhance the urban landscape

Projects at Al Batinah North Municipality, said: “Al Yasmeen Park reflects our commitment to creating modern public spaces that improve the quality of life for residents. It will provide families with a safe and vibrant place to gather while promoting healthier lifestyles and enhancing the urban landscape of Al Suwaiq.”

With a total investment exceeding RO 285,000, the park is expected to become one of the wilayat’s key recreational landmarks. Residents have welcomed the project, describing it as a much-needed addition

to meet the growing community’s leisure needs.

Local resident Ali al Jahwari said: “With the growing population in the wilayat, families need more public spaces where they can enjoy leisure and spend quality time together. Al Yasmeen Park will be an important addition, offering a real breathing space for the community.”

Once complete, Al Yasmeen Park will stand as a prominent recreational hub, supporting Oman’s broader vision of developing sustainable, attractive and people-centred urban environments.

MATCHA CRAZE SWEEPS OMAN AND BEYOND



Rising demand in the Gulf has opened doors for matcha-infused desserts and products, despite challenges like high cost and imitations

BALQEES AL ORAIMI

ONCE RESERVED for Japanese monks and ceremonial rituals, matcha — the finely ground green tea powder — has become a global lifestyle phenomenon. From Kyoto’s traditional tea houses to cafés in Muscat and Dubai, the vibrant green drink now symbolises both wellness and modern living.

Unlike regular green tea, where leaves are steeped and discarded, matcha is made by grinding shade-grown tea leaves into a fine powder, allowing consumers to ingest the entire leaf and maximise its nutrients. This centuries-old practice, rooted in Japan’s 12th-century Buddhist traditions, is now appealing to a new generation worldwide.

Health experts note that matcha



Coffee made me anxious during study sessions. With matcha, I feel alert but calm. It’s become part of my daily routine

AHMED AL AMRI
25-year-old engineering student.



Matcha is rich in antioxidants, linked to immunity and cell protection

combines caffeine with L-theanine, creating steady energy without the jitters of coffee. It is also rich in antioxidants, linked to immunity and cell protection, and is believed to aid metabolism and focus — making it popular among young professionals and students in Oman and across the Gulf.

“Coffee made me anxious during

study sessions. With matcha, I feel alert but calm. It’s become part of my daily routine,” said Ahmed al Amri, a 25-year-old engineering student.

The trend has also sparked local innovation.

Small businesses in the Gulf are experimenting with matcha-infused desserts and snacks, tapping into a growing wellness-driven market. But experts caution that premium matcha is costly, its taste can be acquired, and overconsumption may trigger caffeine-related side effects.

For many, however, matcha has transcended being just a drink.

It is a lifestyle marker — bridging centuries-old Japanese tradition with today’s global health and wellness movement.

Matcha represents a lifestyle choice — one that blends wellness, culture and a touch of trend.

SHORT TAKES



The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth will represent Oman at the book fair

OMAN IS GUEST OF HONOUR AT AMMAN INTL BOOK FAIR

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has been named Guest of Honour at the 24th Amman International Book Fair, taking place at the Hussein Convention Center from September 25 to October 5. Oman will be represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Participating institutions include the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman Society for Writers and Literati, Bait Al Zubair, as well as private publishers and libraries.

Oman has achieved notable success at recent international book fairs in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and South Korea, where its pavilions showcased the nation's cultural heritage, tourism potential and investment in creative industries. These contributions have further enhanced Oman's presence in the global cultural arena. — ONA

SHABAB OMAN II DOCKS IN SPAIN

MADRID: The Royal Navy of Oman's (RNO) ship Shabab Oman II docked at the Port of Almeria, Spain, as part of its seventh international voyage, Glories of the Seas 2025. The voyage carries a noble mission: to strengthen bonds of friendship and brotherhood between the Sultanate of Oman and nations around the world while showcasing the richness of authentic Omani culture at each international stop. — ONA



Shabab Oman II docked at the Port of Almeria

Conference highlights AI ethics in education

MUSCAT: The 11th session of the Arab World Digital Universities Conference concluded in the Wilayat of Al Seeb, emphasising the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. The conference called for universities to reimagine their use of agent AI, AI-enabled learning, and digital technologies in medical education and national research networks.

Participants also stressed strengthening leadership and human resources, embedding digital transformation at the highest levels of university strategy, and empowering faculty, staff and students with the confidence, skills and ethical frameworks needed to excel in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Conference recommendations included promoting flexibility and inclusiveness, launching targeted pilot initiatives accessible to all learners, and integrating locally relevant tools and resources in Arabic to ensure technology meets the needs of Arab societies.



The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth will represent Oman at the book fair

OVER 12,000 INVASIVE BIRDS CULLED IN AL BATINAH SOUTH

AL RUSTAQ: Field teams from the Environment Authority (EA) in Al Batinah South Governorate have eradicated 12,597 invasive birds over the past two months. The operation, carried out with the participation of local community members, used approved measures to ensure the safety of other wildlife species. This effort marks the second phase of a national campaign targeting invasive birds such as the Myna starling and the Indian crow.



This marks the second phase of a national campaign targeting invasive birds

The campaign supports Oman's broader goals of protecting natural resources, preserving biodiversity and advancing sustainable development, in cooperation with government agencies and the community. — ONA

OCA to build RO 7m cancer facility at Madinat al Irfan

IDRIS AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 20

THE Oman Cancer Association (OCA) has been granted a plot of land to build a state-of-the-art facility worth an estimated RO 7 million. The non-profit charity, one of the most respected in the region, provides crucial support to children battling cancer, including free accommodation, meals and transport to treatment centres.

With demand for its services growing, the OCA says the new facility will allow it to expand beyond the current capacity of 16 patients. The new centre, to be built in Madinat al Irfan, will house more than 40 patients across 8,800 square meters. Located between the Royal Hospital and Sultan Qaboos University Hospital — Oman's two leading cancer treatment centres — the facility will be strategically placed to ease access for young patients receiving chemotherapy.

“The new building will bring substantial benefits to patients and to OCA's mission,” said Mona al Aufi, a member of the OCA Board of Directors. She noted that the centre will include 40 rooms with modern medical equipment and

We hope the public will stand with us in building this new facility, which holds the heart and soul of our mission to improve lives



The new centre will include 40 rooms with modern medical equipment and air disinfection systems

air disinfection systems, ensuring safer conditions for patients and their families. For the first time, OCA also plans to dedicate a wing for elderly cancer patients, broadening its services beyond children under 17.

Al Aufi, also a cancer screening trainer, urged the public to support the initiative through awareness, volunteering and contributions. She highlighted OCA's mobile clinic, which travels across the Sultanate of Oman offering free breast cancer screenings, as a reminder of the importance of early detection.

“OCA has always thrived because of the community's support,” she said. “

University Medical City
Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive
Cancer Care & Research Centre

SULTAN QABOOS
COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTRE

الديانة الطبية الجامعية
مركز السلطان قابوس المتكامل
للعلاج وبحوث امراض السرطان

Announcement of Auction for
Leasing Space for ATM and CDM Machine

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre
announces the following Auction:

Auction No.	Auction Title	Site Visit Date & Timing	Last date for Collection of Auction Document	Bid Submission Closing	Auction Specification Fees
CCCCRC/AUC/002/2025	Leasing Space for ATM and CDM Machine	24/09/2025 10:00 AM Meeting Point: SQCCCCRC Main Lobby	30/09/2023	05/10/2025	No Fees

Qualified companies interested in participating in this Auction shall collect the Auction specifications from the date of this advertisement from the following address:
Medical University City – Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre - CCCCCRC/AUC/002/2025
Biddings that meet the above requirement should be submitted (Hardcopy & Softcopy) in a sealed envelope by an Omani National from your company addressed to the head of Purchase Committee in the tender box.
Please note:

- Bids received after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, will not be considered.
- Queries/ clarifications should be submitted immediately, but not later than Two weeks before the date of tender submission.
- For Queries you may Contact via e-mail: purchase@cccrc.gov.om

جمعية الرحمة
ALRAHMA ASSOCIATION
The Motherhood & Child Welfare Centre

Tender Announcement No. (6/2025)

Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Child Welfare Invited specialized companies with **Grade Excellent contracting companies specialized in construction and building works** to execute several housing projects in Muscat Governorate and the surrounding areas.
The Association invites qualified companies with proven experience in housing projects to participate in this tender.
Interested companies are invited to visit the Association's headquarters to **obtain the tender documents upon payment of the applicable fee.**
The deadline for bid submission is **October 5th, 2025.**
For inquiries and communication please contact us via email at (finance@alrahma.om) or (**99367988**)

WORLD

FAREWELLMESSAGE



Palestinians ride in a truck as they move southwards with their belongings. — AFP

HAMAS WARNS CAPTIVES’ FATE OVER ISRAEL’S ASSAULT

GAZA: Hamas’ armed wing published on Saturday “farewell” photographs of most of the remaining captives in Gaza, warning that Israel’s assault on Gaza City could endanger them. With the images, it evoked the case of an Israeli pilot missing since 1986 after being shot down over Lebanon.

Of the 251 people seized by Palestinian group during their attack on Israel in October 2023, 47 remain in Gaza, including 25 the Israeli military says are dead. “Due to Netanyahu’s obstinacy and Zamir’s submission.... a farewell photograph taken at the start of the operation in Gaza City, they wrote alongside the photos.

Israel launched a ground assault on Gaza City on Tuesday, following weeks of heavy air strikes that continue in the territory’s largest urban centre. Hundreds of thousands of residents have fled, while families of hostages have urged the government to halt the offensive, warning it risks the lives of their loved ones still in captivity in Gaza.

The Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades released 46 photographs of hostages on its Telegram channel, each one labelled with the name of Ron Arad, an Israeli air force navigator whose plane went down over southern Lebanon in 1986 during the Lebanese civil war. Arad was believed to have been initially held by groups in Lebanon and is now presumed dead, with his remains never returned. He has been a cause celebre for decades in Israel, where bringing home lost or captured soldiers is considered a national duty.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the world should not be “intimidated” by Israel as it presses its devastating Gaza war and pursues a “creeping” West Bank occupation. Israel has reportedly threatened to annex the West Bank if Western nations press ahead with recognising a Palestinian state at next week’s UN high-level gathering in New York.

“We should not feel intimidated by the risk of retaliation, because with or without doing what we are doing, these actions would go on and at least there is a chance to mobilise international community to put pressure on them not to happen,” he said.

“I don’t think we are talking about retaliation in relation to this or that. There has been a constant progress of the measures of the Israeli government in order to now completely destroy Gaza and have a creeping annexation in the West Bank.”

Guterres has led calls for Israel to hold back from its fierce campaign in Gaza and to back off from the “unprecedented” assault it has threatened on Gaza City. “It is the worst level of death and destruction that I’ve seen my time as secretary general, probably my life and the suffering of the Palestinian people cannot be described — famine, total lack of effective health care, people living without adequate shelters in huge concentration areas.”

The UN chief has nonetheless held off characterising Israel’s conduct in Gaza as a “genocide,” even as UN organs have used the phrasing which Israel bitterly contests. — AFP

PEZESHKIAN VOWS IRAN CAN OVERCOME ANY RETURN OF SANCTIONS

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed on Saturday that Iran would overcome any reimposition of sanctions on it through a so-called “snapback” process, after the UN Security Council voted not to permanently lift sanctions on Tehran. “Through the ‘snapback’ they block the road, but it is the brains and the thoughts that open or build the road,” Pezeshkian said in remarks carried by state television. “They cannot stop us. They can strike our Natanz

or Fordow, but they are unaware that it is humans who built and will rebuild Natanz,” Pezeshkian said. The Security Council move came on Friday after Britain, France and Germany launched a 30-day process last month to reimpose sanctions, accusing Tehran of failing to abide by a 2015 deal with world powers aimed at preventing it from developing a nuclear weapon. “We will never surrender in the face of excessive demands because we have the power to change the

situation,” Pezeshkian was quoted as saying by state media. The “snapback” process would reimpose UN sanctions on Iran unless an agreement is reached on a delay between Tehran and key European powers within about a week. The snapback would reimpose an arms embargo, a ban on uranium enrichment, a ban on activities with ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, a global asset freeze and travel bans on Iranian entities. — Reuters

Zelensky to meet Trump as Russia intensifies attacks

UKRAINIAN

President Volodymyr Zelensky said he would meet US counterpart Donald Trump on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly next week as Russia intensified strikes across his country. Russia carried out one of its largest aerial attacks overnight, firing 40 missiles and some 580 drones at Ukraine in a barrage that killed at least three people and wounded dozens, Zelensky said on Saturday.



A Ukrainian serviceman sits next to anti-tank defences in the centre of Kyiv. — AFP

A Ukrainian strike, meanwhile, killed four people in Russia’s southwestern Samara region, the local governor said, in one of the deadliest Ukrainian retaliatory strikes on Russia since Moscow launched its attack in 2022. Zelensky said he would hold “a meeting with the President of the United States”, adding he would discuss security guarantees for Ukraine and sanctions on Russia during the talks with Trump.

Ukraine has insisted on Western-backed security guarantees to prevent future Russian attacks. Russian President Vladimir Putin has, however, warned that any Western troops in Ukraine would be unacceptable and legitimate targets. A US-led push for a quick end to the war has stalled and Russia effectively ruled out a meeting between Putin and Zelensky — something that Kyiv says is the only way towards peace.

“We expect sanctions if there is no meeting between the leaders or, for example, no ceasefire,” Zelensky said in comments released by the

Zelensky said he would hold “a meeting with the President of the United States”, adding he would discuss security guarantees for Ukraine and sanctions on Russia during the talks with Trump

Ukrainian presidency on Saturday. “We are ready for a meeting with Putin. I have spoken about this. Both bilateral and trilateral. He is not ready,” Zelensky added. In Russia’s latest aerial assault of Ukraine, “a missile with cluster munitions directly struck an apartment building” in the central city of Dnipro, Zelensky said earlier on social media. He posted pictures of cars and a building on fire and rescuers carrying a person to safety amid rubble scattered nearby.

The strikes come a day after three Russian fighter jets violated the airspace of Estonia, an allegation Moscow denied. But it triggered fears in the West of a dangerous new provocation from Moscow after Poland last week complained that around 20 Russian drones overflew its territory. Zelensky repeated the call for “joint solutions” to shoot

down drones over Ukraine “together with other countries”.

Russia, which has been chipping away at Ukrainian territory for months, announced on Saturday its troops had captured the village of Berezove in the Dnipropetrovsk region. In the northeastern Kharkiv region, “intense actions” were ongoing in the key area of Kupiansk, Zelensky said.

In Russia, four people were killed “in an enemy drone attack last night,” Samara governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said on social media. He earlier said “fuel and energy facilities” were targeted, without specifying the damage. Ukrainian General Staff said “strategic objects of the Russian aggressor were struck”, adding its forces “inflicted damage” on the Saratov Oil Refinery and struck the Novokuybyshevsk Oil Refinery in the Samara. — AFP



PASSENGERS STRANDED IN EUROPE AFTER CYBERATTACK

LONDON: A cyberattack on a provider of check-in and boarding systems has disrupted operations at several major European airports including London’s Heathrow, the continent’s busiest, causing flight delays and cancellations on Saturday. Collins Aerospace, which provides systems for several airlines at airports globally, is experiencing a technical issue that may cause delays for departing passengers, Heathrow Airport said, having warned of delays.

Brussels Airport and Berlin Airport were also affected. RTX, Collins Aerospace’s parent company, said it was aware of a “cyber-related disruption” to its software at selected airports, without naming them. Hours later, Dublin Airport said it was also facing a minor impact from the issue, along with Cork Airport, Ireland’s second biggest after Dublin.

“The impact is limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop and can be mitigated with manual check-in operations,” RTX said, adding that it was working to fix the issue as quickly as possible. — Reuters

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

S Sudan ex-vice-president ‘ready’ for trial



South Sudan’s detained former vice-president Riek Machar is “ready” to face trial and will appear in court on Monday. The government of President Salva Kiir this month charged Machar with murder, treason and crimes against humanity and stripped him of his position as first vice-president in the unity government. “The accused is ready for the trial. He is ready and he is in good health,” his lawyer, Kur Lual Kur, said. — AFP

TEMPERATURES SURGE

Firefighters, troops battle blazes in Spain



Firefightersand troops battled wildfires in northwestern Spain, fuelled by dry conditions and high temperatures. In the province of Lugo in Galicia, 82 brigades and 25 waterbombing aircraft were tackling a fire that erupted on Thursday, which has so far destroyed around 1,400 hectares. Meanwhile, 34 brigades and 17 aircraft were fighting a separate blaze in Ourense province, also ignited on Thursday, which has consumed around 240 hectares. — AFP

ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY

S Africa oppn campaigns to seize capital



South Africa’s Democratic Alliance, the opposition party in a fragile coalition with the African National Congress, named veteran activist Helen Zille to lead its campaign to take the country’s main city Johannesburg from the ANC. Local elections scheduled to be held between November 2026 and January 2027 loom as a major test for the ANC. “I am deeply indebted to the Democratic Alliance for entrusting me with this enormous responsibility,” Zille said. — AFP

The New York Times

The city that embodies the US-Korea bond



CHOE
SANG-HUN

The author is the
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DOUGLAS MacArthur has not faded away in Incheon, South Korea. From its hilltop Freedom Park, the American general, in the form of a bronze statue, gazes down at the narrow channel that connects the city to the Yellow Sea. On a September dawn 75 years ago, tens of thousands of US and South Korean Marines under his command braved a hail of enemy fire to approach the shore and scale seawalls protecting Incheon. They retook the city from North Korean forces and went on to liberate Seoul, the South Korean capital, which lies roughly 25 miles to its east.

The Incheon Landing, the US military’s most daring amphibious assault since D-Day in Normandy, turned the tide of the Korean War and made MacArthur a household name in South Korea. In Incheon, he is more than that; the city has made him and his maneuver part of its identity, hosting commemorative ceremonies each year.

On Sunday, South Korean and US Marines marched down an Incheon street as onlookers cheered, waving flags of both countries. On Monday, the landing’s anniversary, amphibious assault vehicles vroomed across the water into the harbor. Marines later hoisted the South Korean flag on a pier as a large outdoor screen flashed black-and-white images from the actual landing 75 years ago.

If the Incheon landing symbolised the United States’ commitment to defend South Korea, then Incheon’s annual “We Remember” festivities embody the

gratefulness many South Koreans still feel toward the Americans. But the alliance has been roiled in recent months as the Trump administration outraged South Korea by imposing heavy tariffs on its exports and by arresting hundreds of its citizens who were building a factory in Ellabell, Georgia.

This is not the first time that some South Koreans are questioning the dynamics of the relationship with Washington. Some progressives no longer see it as a savior but as a bully. They have demanded the removal of the MacArthur statue, which was built in 1957 with citizens’ donations, once setting a fire on the pedestal. But like in years past, Incheon pressed ahead with its annual celebration, reaffirming its singular place in South Korea’s modern history and its ties with the United States. “Without the Incheon landing, South Korea as we know it would not have existed,” Incheon Mayor Yoo Jeong Bok said in an interview. “It reminds us that when we keep the alliance strong, we can keep South Korea free and defend the free world.”

On September 15, 1950, Allied transport ships strung out down the Incheon channel as far as the eye could see. US Marines clambered down cargo nets into flat-bottomed landing craft, as warships pounded the beaches with shells to soften the enemy defense. Allied planes zoomed over, bombing and strafing the seawalls.

Today, Incheon’s bustling port exemplifies the contrast between the globalised South and the isolated North of the Korean Peninsula. Cruise ships ply the waters along with commercial vessels shipping out South Korean exports like Kia cars and bringing in

Today, Incheon’s bustling port exemplifies the contrast between the globalised South and the isolated North of the Korean Peninsula. Cruise ships ply the waters along with commercial vessels shipping out South Korean exports

oil and natural gas to fuel its economy, one of Asia’s largest. Tall port silos and derricks loom over what used to be the seawalls US Marines had to scale. Wolmido — an Incheon islet that American warplanes napalmed before the landing, not only scorching North Korean pillboxes but also killing villagers — now hosts an amusement park where children scream on roller coasters.

To the south, mud flats have been replaced with piers stacked with shipping containers, and the Songdo free economic zone, which is home to outposts of American universities, a thriving biotech industry and gleaming skyscrapers housing United Nations offices. Incheon is now among South Korea’s fastest growing cities. It has overtaken Busan, another port city, in terms of economic output and is second only to Seoul.

For centuries Korea was known as the hermit kingdom. It opened up for trade only in the late 1800s, when Incheon was a cluster of muddy fishing huts.

Japan, China and the United States all established trade posts in Incheon because of its proximity to Seoul.

American missionaries also arrived through Incheon, bringing Western medicine and education with them. Today, roughly 30 per cent of all South Koreans identify as Christian. Korea’s first railway, highway and telegram lines all started from Incheon. Its first baseball and soccer games were held in Incheon. The old port area now attracts tourists with museums, alleys with turn-of-the-century themes and with its Chinatown, the birthplace of a national noodle dish called jajangmyeon.

Trump will institute \$100,000 fee for skilled worker visas



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PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Friday said that the federal government would begin adding a \$100,000-a-year fee for visas given to skilled foreign workers, a significant overhaul of how the United States distributes what are known as H-1B visas. He also signed an executive order creating an expedited visa programme he called the “gold card,” an idea he previewed in February. The card will cost \$1 million, or \$2 million if a corporation is sponsoring someone seeking it, White House officials said.

The moves were the latest efforts by the Trump administration in a wide-ranging crackdown on all forms of immigration. The H-1B fee is likely to face legal challenges. But if it survives, companies that hire skilled international workers would have to pay \$100,000 each year for any employee working on the visa, for up to six years. The fee applies only to new applicants, a White House official said.

“Either the person is very valuable to the company and America, or they’re going to depart, and the company is going to hire an American,” Howard Lutnick, the commerce secretary, said at the signing in the Oval Office on Friday. “And that’s the point of immigration: Hire Americans and make sure the people coming in are the top, top people.” He added: “Stop the nonsense of letting people just come into this country on these visas that were given away for free.”

Trump framed the “gold card” programme as a way for the government to raise

billions of dollars, and Lutnick said the programme would likely replace all other green card visa programmes. “You can prove exceptional value to the United States America by contributing a million dollars to the United States of America,” he said on a call with reporters after the signing of the proclamation.

Many industries rely on the H-1B visas to fill jobs, including technology and finance. Hospitals and universities also make ample use of them. The new fee could substantially affect their ability to fill jobs, changing the nature of the country’s workforce. As of late June, Amazon had more than 10,000 workers using H-1B visas, according to government data — by far the most of any company. Other top beneficiaries included Microsoft, Meta, Apple, Google, JPMorgan Chase, Walmart and Deloitte.

Administration officials downplayed concerns about the \$100,000 fee, saying it would help American workers’ wages by discouraging companies from using the visas to bring in lower-wage international workers. Such an expense would also limit the number of applicants and provide more certainty for companies that had relied on a lottery, the officials added.

Historically, 85,000 new visas have been provided annually to hire so-called high-skilled foreign workers at companies through that lottery process. If people are selected through the lottery, they are required to pay a fee for a vetting process. The new \$100,000 fee is being added to those costs, officials said.

Doug Rand, a former



President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office.

The H-1B fee is likely to face legal challenges. But if it survives, companies that hire skilled international workers would have to pay \$100,000 each year for any employee working on the visa, for up to six years

senior official at US Citizenship and Immigration Services under President Joe Biden, questioned the legality of the policy. “Tying an entry ban to a fee, let alone a \$100,000 fee, isn’t likely to survive five seconds in court,” he said. Tom Jawetz, a former senior attorney at the Department of Homeland Security under Biden, also said the order would come under legal scrutiny. “This is how the mob operates when it demands protection money,” he said. “It’s not how the laws of a country are administered.”

The new fee partly resolves a debate among some conservatives that began last winter. Immigration hard-liners have argued that the foreign visa worker programme has hurt the United States, because companies have brought in foreign workers at lower wages, displacing

Americans. Business leaders, particularly in the technology sector, have said that the visa programme has helped to keep American companies competitive.

The debate has pitted some of Trump’s most loyal backers against some of his biggest financial boosters. With Friday’s proclamation, the president indicated that, for now, he was siding with those looking to make the visa programme more difficult to use. In the call with reporters, Lutnick claimed that companies were “very happy” about the fee, “because they would like a process that is known, that is clear and that is swift.” When a company trains a worker, “you’re going to train one of the recent graduates from one of the great universities across our land, train Americans,” he added. “Stop bringing in people to take our jobs.”

OPINION

Can virtual reality heal the mind?



DR HAMED AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

LAST weekend, my son brought a virtual reality headset and suggested that I try it. The game he had installed was a virtual reality roller coaster, and all I had to do was sit in a chair facing the TV and put on the headset. When the game started, I found myself immersed as if I were on a real roller coaster. My heart began to race, and I couldn't help but scream as the trolley climbed up before plunging down. I felt the rush of adrenaline and excitement without having to leave my living room.

That short experience made me think, if a headset could trick my brain into believing I was flying through the air, could it be used to treat fears and other mental health problems? As it turns out, researchers have been asking the same question, and the results are promising.

For decades, psychologists have relied on exposure therapy to help people overcome phobias.

The principle is simple: by gradually and safely exposing a person to the object of their

fear, whether it is spiders, heights, or flying, the brain eventually learns that the situation is not as dangerous as it feels. But in reality, it is not always easy to recreate these fears. You cannot, for example, bring a plane into the clinic every week. That is where virtual reality (VR) comes in.

With VR, therapists can simulate realistic scenarios in a controlled environment. A patient with a fear of flying can "board" a virtual plane, hear the cabin announcements, feel the engines roar, and even experience turbulence, all while sitting in a therapist's office. Similarly, someone with a fear of heights can stand on the edge of a tall building in a virtual city, gradually working their way higher as their confidence grows. The brain reacts almost as if the situation were real, but the safety of the therapy room remains intact.

Another technology, called Augmented Reality (AR), overlays digital images onto the real world and has been used to help people with social anxiety. It can be used to attend a simulated virtual job interview with several

Virtual reality devices can be more than games or amusement but a tool for healing minds, reducing suffering, and giving people back control over their lives.

avatars posing as managers who provide you with detailed feedback on your performance, tone of voice and level of confidence. This will enable you to improve your skills before your real interview.

Beyond treating mental illness, VR can also be used to bring comfort to people with terminal conditions.

At a recent exhibition, I came across a VR headset designed for patients with advanced cancer, allowing them to experience being at the Holy Mosque in Mecca. Through the headset, they could see the Kaaba in full view and hear the prayers resonating around them. For those too unwell to travel, this technology offers a sense of spiritual closeness and peace, giving them the opportunity to feel as if they had visited Mecca one last time.

In my opinion, a VR device can be more than games or amusement, but a tool for healing minds, reducing suffering and giving people back control over their lives. So next time you are at a mental health clinic, ask if they have VR therapy.

UN CHIEF SAYS 1.5C CLIMATE GOAL IN PERIL

AMELIE BOTTOLLIER-DEPOIS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that efforts to cap climate warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level are failing, as the UN prepared to host a climate week event alongside its annual diplomatic gathering.

The climate goals for 2035 of the countries that signed the Paris Agreement, also known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), were initially expected several months ago.

However, uncertainties related to geopolitical tensions and trade rivalries have slowed the process.

"We are on the verge of this objective collapsing," he said.

"We absolutely need countries to come... with climate action plans that are fully aligned with 1.5 degrees (Celsius), that cover the whole of their economies and the whole of their greenhouse gas emissions," he said.

"It is essential that we have a drastic reduction of emissions in the next few years if you want to keep the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit alive."

Less than two months before the COP30 meeting in Brazil, dozens of countries have been slow to announce their plans — particularly China and the European Union, powers considered pivotal for the future of climate diplomacy.

Efforts to combat the impact of man-made global warming have taken a back seat to numerous crises in recent years, including the coronavirus pandemic and several wars, with Guterres seeking to reignite focus on the issue.

The UN hopes that the climate summit co-chaired on Wednesday in New York by Guterres and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will be an opportunity to breathe life into efforts ahead of COP30.

Guterres said he was concerned that Nationally Determined Contributions, or national climate action plans, may not ultimately support the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Containing global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial era is the most ambitious goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which aggregates the work of scientists worldwide, predicts a 50:50 chance that the climate will have warmed by an average of 1.5C by 2030-2035.

Scientists emphasise the importance of containing global warming as each fraction of a degree increase further increases risks such as heatwaves or destruction of marine life.

Containing warming to 1.5C rather than 2C would significantly limit its most catastrophic consequences. According to the UN, 2024 was the hottest year ever recorded. — AFP

Fake it ‘til you make it

THE brain is the master puppeteer, tugging the strings of our body with every thought, impulse and emotion. However, it's possible to turn the tables on it.

The body can trick the brain into feeling things it didn't sign up for. You've probably heard the advice: "Fake it 'til you make it." Well, science suggests that if you plaster a grin on your face, even when you're feeling about as cheerful as a Monday morning without coffee, your brain may actually start to believe you're happy. This is known as the facial feedback hypothesis, and it's been tested in numerous studies.

In one famous experiment, participants were asked to hold a pen between their teeth, forcing a smile-like expression. The result? They rated cartoons as funnier than those who were forced to frown. Your brain notices the smile, assumes you must be having a good time, and obligingly floods you with a little dopamine and serotonin. Smiling is just one way the body can outwit the mind. Posture is another. Slouching may feel comfortable, but it also whispers to your brain: "We're tired, defeated, and possibly in need of a nap."

Standing tall with shoulders back and chest open sends the opposite message: "We're ready for action." Research shows that upright posture can reduce stress and increase confidence. It's the psychological equivalent of upgrading to fibre optic Internet. Breathing is another powerful trick. When feeling stressed, the body often breathes shallow and fast, which convinces the brain that things are worse than they are. Slow, deep breathing, however, activates the parasympathetic nervous system — the body's natural "calm down" switch. Think of it as fooling your brain into believing you're meditating on a beach, even if you're actually stuck in traffic.

Exercise works similarly. You don't need to run a marathon to reap the benefits; even a brisk walk can release endorphins, those delightful little chemicals that act like the brain's personal cheerleaders.



If the body can trick the mind, why not use it to your advantage?



KARIM EASTERBROOK

The author is Former School Principal Cambridge UK

Exercise doesn't just trick the mind, it hijacks it, flooding it with feel-good signals that rival mild antidepressants. As a bonus, you also get stronger legs. Sometimes the trick is subtler, as in the case of warmth.

In a classic experiment at Yale University, researchers handed students either a hot coffee or an iced coffee before introducing them to a stranger.

The students who held the warm drink consistently rated the stranger as friendlier and more trustworthy than those holding the cold one. Physical warmth, it seems, doesn't just heat your hands; it warms your social perceptions too. Offering someone a hot drink on a cold day can be the universal peace treaty.

Expressive hand gestures can make you feel more enthusiastic while speaking. Self-touch, like placing a hand over your heart,

can reduce stress. Hugs from friends, meanwhile, are proven to boost 'oxytocin' (sometimes called the "love hormone" for its role in facilitating positive feelings). Even your eyes can help: looking upward can sometimes lift your spirits, while guided eye movements may help reduce trauma-related stress.

The mind and body are in constant conversation, and usually the body gets the last word. Changing posture, breath, movement or even facial expression can nudge your brain into a different state of mind. Next time you're feeling low, try smiling, standing tall or handing someone a hot coffee.

Your brain might ask, "What are you doing? We're supposed to be miserable!" Ignore it. If the body can trick the mind, why not use it to your advantage? I'm slouching. Time for a nap.

In conversation or an argument... silence is golden



RAY PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

HAVE you ever returned from vacation and on your first day back at work asked a colleague, “How was your vacation?” While knowing that what you really wanted was to talk about yours? Think about it.

It doesn’t really roll off the tongue in the same way as the 80/20 rule, but the advantages of the 43/57 rule may create more opportunities in business than we may initially consider. Keep in mind this, by Instagram star and keynote speaker Lolly Daskal, “The heart of dialogue is simple - The profoundness is to listen.”

Traditionally, sales teams used customer relationship management data to inform their sales strategies, utilising reflective sales comments and customer feedback to create a profile of what works and what doesn’t in completing sales. However, Amit Bendov and Eilon Reshef felt that the anecdotal, and often incomplete, nature of this existing data collection, reliant as it was on sales representatives’ conscious recollections of their customer interactions, was “often guesswork, incomplete, inaccurate and subjective”, so not fit for purpose.

They considered there must be “a better way”, and in 2015, launched a start-up that became Gong Research Labs, and one of their first ventures was to analyse audio from more

than 25,000 sales interactions, seeking to find out who was listening, when, and who was just ‘waiting their turn’, focused on their response.

Their subsequent research found that optimum sales yield was achieved where the salesperson talked 43 per cent of the time and listened 57 per cent. Thus, the 43/57 rule was born.

In practice, very few, either salesmen or customers, were listening, with the salesmen often working from a mantra or a ‘crib sheet’, while the customer, predominantly at the outset with a negative predisposition, is focused on ending the call.

Both were talking, but neither listening, ignorant of the advice of 17th-century French philosopher, Jean de Bruyere, who remarked, “The great charm of conversation consists less in the display of one’s own wit and intelligence than in the power to draw forth the resources of others.”

It seems most of us like to talk, and especially about our product, and according to research by Harvard University, we need to demonstrate more respect for the process of negotiation, to listen, and to show we are open to understanding the proposition. In fact, away from commercial applications, we must listen and be certain our responses are tailored to what we have been told, rather than what we are taking from what has been

Traditionally, sales teams used customer relationship management data to inform their sales strategies, utilising reflective sales comments and customer feedback to create a profile of what works, and what doesn’t in completing sales

said. We need to be empathetic.

Kate Murphy, the author of ‘You’re Not Listening’, suggests we stay calm, saying “Deep breaths are always good. They’re always good. Because it... calms down that fear response. It helps you get more centred”, and that allows us to develop our curiosity, making it so much more important to be curious than to be right. Again, if you think about it, we so often go into conversations seeking not to be wrong, rather than determined to be right.

The reality is that listening doesn’t come easy for some, and Swedish scriptwriter Annika Thor says the silences between words are just as important as those words. However, we can also benefit from her advice in developing a more viable speaking/ listening ratio: First, to use silence, because it nurtures ideas and engenders respect. Secondly, let your questions be ‘organic’, not from a prepared script, and where possible, use a key word or phrase from what the other person has said and demonstrate that you are indeed listening. Thirdly, respect the process, the people, and stay engaged with them and their agenda.

It’s all very well thinking we have ‘stuff’ we want to say... but we surely make better impressions, socially, and sell more product, commercially, if we practice effective listening.

TRUMP-BACKED PANEL SOWS DOUBT OVER COVID-19 SHOTS

MAGGY DONALDSON AND CHARLOTTE CAUSIT

A Trump-backed health panel questioned the efficacy and safety of Covid-19 vaccines - and declined explicitly to recommend them.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) - a panel stacked with members handpicked by controversial US health secretary and anti-vaccination advocate Robert F Kennedy Jr - said obtaining a Covid-19 shot should be based on individual choice in consultation with a medical professional.

The panel also approved language recommending that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge healthcare providers to more strongly warn about alleged risks from vaccinations. Many medical and scientific organisations have cited evidence of the Covid-19 shot’s safety and its record of providing strong protection against severe illness or death.

Calling the committee’s actions “extraordinarily vague”, Sean O’Leary of the American Academy of Pediatrics said, “This was like nothing I’ve ever seen.”

“What it looked like to me was a lot of clear efforts to sow distrust in vaccines, to instil fear,” he said. “The focus of a lot of the discussion that we saw today around COVID vaccines was around myths, anecdotes, case series, case reports,” O’Leary said. “They were not focused at all on the actual science.”

Those comments mirrored criticisms levelled by non-voting observers who attended the meeting.

“It’s troubling to see the erosion of the committee’s integrity,” said Sandra Fryhofer of the American Medical Association.

President Donald Trump’s Food and Drug Administration has already narrowed approval for Covid-19 shots - which all Americans could once get with relative ease - to the elderly and people with underlying conditions.

That followed Kennedy’s spring announcement that the United States would no longer recommend the shots for children and healthy pregnant women. Public health experts have warned these shifts could muddle access for people seeking boosters both in terms of cost and availability, amid a resurgence in cases and hospitalisations.

The ACIP committee considered whether to require that any person seeking a Covid-19 vaccine first obtain a prescription, but that measure narrowly failed by a tiebreak vote.

“The segment of the population that is under-insured, has lack of access to healthcare - they’re going to be unable to get a prescription. And those are the people that are at highest risk,” said ACIP member and epidemiologist Catherine Stein in her dissent.

The ACIP meeting’s first day ended in confusion and contradiction. The committee recommended no child under four should receive the combination MMRV shot, which covers measles, mumps, rubella and varicella. — AFP

Reimagining agriculture for young people...

IS the agriculture sector fated to die out? Globally, the average age of farmers has been steadily creeping up, approaching 60 in developed countries. This leaves the sector, which supplies roughly one-quarter of jobs worldwide, in a bind: Unless it attracts large numbers of young workers, it could decline precipitously.

Promisingly, 16 per cent of the world’s population – 1.2 billion people – are aged 15 to 24, and many in this cohort are struggling to find jobs, especially in the developing world. For example, in Africa, people under 25 comprise about 60 per cent of the population, while around one-third of Africans aged 15 to 35 are unemployed.

But young people in the developing world continue to flee rural areas in search of higher-paying, higher-status work in cities and foreign countries. This migration pattern has contributed to a decades-long global decline in the number of young people working in agriculture and living in rural areas.

In Kenya, youth agricultural employment fell dramatically in recent decades, from 58.9 per cent in 1990 to 28.5 per cent in 2020. Meanwhile, Europe’s rural youth population (ages 15-24) shrank by 1.7 million between 2013 and 2019, and only 12 per cent of the continent’s farms are managed by people under 40 in 2025. In Southeast Asia, rural youth comprised only around 7 per cent of the total population in 2020, down from about 16 per cent in 1950, while just 11 per cent of Japan’s farmers are under 50. And in Latin America, 1.2 million young people are expected to leave agriculture by 2030. Enticing new generations to work in agriculture requires a paradigm shift in how we view the sector. It must be reimagined as a first choice for young people – at the frontier of economic development and offering enticing employment opportunities along the supply chain – rather than a last resort. After all, agriculture is not just about growing food. It also creates jobs in processing, transportation, retail and other connected



Enticing new generations to work in agriculture requires a paradigm shift in how we view the sector.



MAXIMO TORERO

The writer is Chief Economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

industries.

In addition to its impact on employment, a thriving agriculture sector bolsters overall well-being. In low-income countries, growth in agriculture is 2-3 times more effective at reducing poverty than growth in other sectors, while higher farm productivity is critical to improving nutrition and food security. But the sector suffers from a problem of perception. Young people tend to see farming as dirty, low-tech, poorly paid and lacking status – the opposite of “modern work.” If governments are serious about luring the young to agriculture, they must sell its profitability, breadth and scale. Presenting a convincing case will require policies that address the valid concerns underlying how young people view the sector. That means reforming land-tenure systems, mandating higher wages and providing entrepreneurial support.

Too often, though, government policies focus on low-return farming activities that offer little financial stability or career progression. Instead of being encouraged to grow crops or raise animals, young people should be steered towards the rapidly growing category of off-farm jobs fuelled by urbanisation, technological advances, and

increased demand for locally sourced food. This includes food processing, packaging, storage and distribution (such as urban farm markets). For example, to boost the incomes of producers and workers, Kuapa Kokoo, Ghana’s leading cooperative of smallholder cocoa farmers, is investing in domestic processing facilities.

In the Mekong Delta – Vietnam’s rice bowl and one of Asia’s most important farming regions – few young people want to work the fields. Rather, they see their future in agricultural services, extension and research, as well as agribusiness. In fact, agri-tech start-ups are already reshaping supply chains in Vietnam by helping smallholder farmers and cooperatives access financing and export markets. Developing digital solutions is especially important for ensuring the sustainability and resilience of small producers and expanding the industry. In Croatia, specialised software tailored to short supply chains automates delivery, pickups and accounting, freeing small farmers to focus on growing food. In Colombia, a low-cost smartphone app helps citrus growers improve crop quality and access markets by linking them to agronomists and merchants.

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SPORTS

SHORTTAKES



Talya and Salma celebrate with bronze medals

TABLE TENNIS TEAM CLINCH TWO BRONZES AT ARAB CHAMPIONSHIP

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 20

Oman’s talented paddlers including Talia al Rawahi and Salma al Nasri claimed bronze medals at the 36th Arab Table Tennis Championship which concluded recently in Morocco. Talia, who is currently in an external training programme at Hennebont Training Center in France, secured bronze in the Under-13 singles category while Salma, playing in Ibri Club, clinched bronze in the Under-11 singles competition.

Both girls managed to earn a bronze medal for Oman at the GCC Youth Games in UAE last year. This is an additional achievement brought by them which is highlights the rising talent within Oman’s youth ranks as both players delivered impressive performances against strong opposition from across the Arab region.



I am proud of achievement by both girls which is a result of success and hard work beside an intensive preparations over the past months. These medals are a strong motivation for the players and for us as a team to continue striving for higher goals

OMID SHAMS SHARBABAKI
Oman’s head coach

the young players’ achievements. “I am proud of achievement by both girls which is a result of success and hard work beside an intensive preparations over the past months. These medals are a strong motivation for the players and for us as a team to continue striving for higher goals,” Sharbabaki said. “I hope this accomplishment will encourage both players to perform much better in the coming events and also push others to mark a significant milestone in Oman’s table tennis development especially at the youth level.”

Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) recently concluded successfully hosting of the 2025 Arab Clubs Table Tennis Championship as Bahrain club defeated Egypt’s ENPPI 3-1 to clinch the men’s team while Egypt’s Petrojet claimed the title of the Women’s team title following their crucial victory over Egypt’s ENPPI 3-2. The event, was under an umbrella of the Arab Table Tennis Federation, witnessed the presence of 35 clubs as it was the largest number in the history of the Arab Clubs Championships.

Camel racing witnesses thrilling action

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 20

THE opening day of the 2025-2026 annual camel racing season kicked off on Saturday with exciting competitions held simultaneously at Al Abyad in the Wilayat of Sinaw, Al Felaij in the Wilayat of Barka, and Al Bashayer in the Wilayat of Adam. The action-packed day featured 24 rounds at Al Abyad, 27 rounds at Al Felaij, and several rounds at Al Bashayer, including three races for human riders over 2 km, attracting large crowds and showcasing the finest Omani-bred camels.

In the Hagayeg (2 km) category, the top winner at Al Abyad track in the Wilayat of Sinaw was Al Woslah, owned by Ahmed al Wahibi, clocking an impressive time of 2:52:47. Meanwhile, at Al Felaij track in the Wilayat of Barka, the first-place camel was Al Abirat, owned by Mohammed al Qanoubi, finishing the race in 3:05:03.

On Sunday, the second day of the 2025-2026 annual camel racing season will continue with a full schedule across Al Felaij, Al Bashayer, and Al Abyad tracks. Competitions will include the Idha’ (4 km) category with four rounds at each track, followed by races for the Thanaya (5 km) category. The day will also feature contests for older camels in the Al Houl and Al Zamoul (5 km) categories. Each track will host multiple rounds, allowing camel owners and trainers to compete for top positions and showcase the finest Omani-bred camels.

THE FIRST DAY RESULT IN AL ABYAD HAGAYEG 2 KM

Read as round, camel’s name, owner, time

- 1, Al Woslah, Ahmed al Wahibi, 2:52:47
- 2, Mayasah, Nasser al Ghafili, 2:54:81
- 3, Hamloul, Hamad al Ghafili, 2:54:47
- 4, Malazim, Ahmed al Ghafili, 2:56:09
- 5, Shawahen, Suleiman al Jahafi, 2:55:28
- 6, Mashwesh, Saud al Wahibi, 2:56:60
- 7, Basmah, Talib al Wahibi, 2:59:87
- 8, Al Nashmi, Suhail al Jahafi, 3:00:76
- 9, Al Shars, Mubarak al Jadili, 2:59:22
- 10, Al Dhabi, Sultan al Habsi, 2:56:81
- 11, Al Nader, Hazaa al Hadhwi, 3:01:00
- 12, Ta’azeez, Yasser al Ghafili, 2:58:37
- 13, Hamloul, Yasser al Wahibi, 3:01:18



In the Hagayeg 2 km category, the top winner at Al Abyad track in the Wilayat of Sinaw was Al Woslah, owned by Ahmed al Wahibi

- 14, Al Dhabi, Salem al Rashidi, 2:59:85

LAQAYA 3 KM

- 1, Bilsheh, Mohammed al Wahibi, 4:36:09
- 2, Al Kaidah, Abdullah al Ghafili, 4:38:75
- 3, Al Silver, Hamdan al Wahibi, 4:32:09
- 4, Al Taif, Abdullah al Ghafili, 4:35:69
- 5, Shawahen, Saleh al Wahibi, 4:38:47
- 6, Mudallal, Sami al Fazari, 4:36:34
- 7, Muzayar, Rashid al Zarai, 4:34:97
- 8, Kheirah, Mohammed al Wahibi, 4:37:66

THE RESULT IN AL FELAIJ TRACK Hagayeg 2 km

- 1, Al Abirat, Mohammed al Qanoubi, 3:05:03
- 2, Zaha, Hamad al Wahibi, 3:03:79
- 3, Al Kasih, Saeed al Mugheiri, 3:02:59
- 4, Mahdiya, Hamad al Wahibi, 3:04:70
- 5, Al Ain, Saeed al Mugheiri, 3:04:98
- 6, Al Solai, Saeed al Mugheiri, 3:05:86
- 7, Al Shahiniyah, Ali al Khrousi, 3:05:20

- 8, Dhofar, Abdullah al Rashidi, 3:05:54
- 9, Atheer, Hamad al Wahibi, 3:07:18
- 10, Mubashara, Abdullah al Musallami, 3:06:57
- 11, Labeeb, Saeed al Mugheiri, 3:06:55
- 12, Al Fahdah, Hazaa al Shibli, 3:07:66
- 13, Mustanas, Mansour al Shibli, 3:03:61
- 14, Shawahen, Saeed al Hajri, 3:08:79
- Laqaya 3 km
- 15, Al Sadawiyah, Ahmed al Hajri, 4:46:97
- 16, Zahiyah, Abdullah al Amri, 4:43:79
- 17, Mustaheel, Abdullah al Mazini, 4:45:80
- 18, Ab’ad, Nasser al Nasiri, 4:45:04
- 19, Intihar, Ghasi al Mushaykhi, 4:44:89
- 20, Al Shababi, Salem al Hashami, 4:43:88
- 21, Al Obour, Hamad al Saifi, 4:45:43
- 22, Thann, Hamad i al Saifi, 4:47:47
- 23, Shamdan, Ali al Owaisi, 4:45:61
- 24, Al Rawdah, Amer al Zarai, 3:18:17
- 25, Za’faranah, Amer al Zarai, 3:16:15
- 26, Saib, Amer al Zarai, 3:17:10

Seeb defeat Samayil 3–1 in Jetour Cup campaign

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 20

Al Seeb Club sealed their rescheduled match from the first round of the Oman Jetour Cup with a deserved 3–1 victory over their guests Samayil , in a Group Two clash on Friday evening. The result confirmed Seeb’s strong start to the tournament, while Samayil suffered their first defeat, which could complicate their campaign.

The match opened with attacking play from both sides, as they shared control in the first 15 minutes. Samayil nearly struck first in the 6th minute when Osama al Zaabi received a pass inside the box and fired a powerful shot that went just over the bar. Seeb responded quickly through Mohammed Abdulhakim, who went one-on-one with the goalkeeper, only for defender Ahmed Abdulmohsin to intervene at the last moment and clear the danger.

Seeb’s pressure paid off in the 19th minute when Omar al Malki delivered a clever through ball that split



Seeb and Samayil players in action

Samayil’s defence, allowing Abdulmajid al Balushi to slot confidently into the net for the opener. Samayil thought they had equalised in the 34th minute through Osama al Zaabi, but his effort was ruled out for offside, keeping the score unchanged.

The home side continued pressing with swift

counterattacks that troubled Samayil’s defence. Just a minute before halftime, Seeb orchestrated a flowing move involving several players, ending with Mohammed al Hatmi’s precise pass into the area, where Marwan Tayeeb was perfectly positioned to finish and make it 2–0. The first half closed with Seeb

firmly in control, while Samayil’s attempts lacked real threat.

In the second half, Samayil returned with renewed determination and managed to win a penalty in the 71st minute after one of their players was fouled inside the box. Moayyed al Hashami stepped up and converted confidently to cut the deficit to 2–1. The goal lifted Samayil’s spirits, and they pushed hard for an equaliser with successive attacks, but Seeb’s disciplined defence and alert goalkeeper preserved the lead.

As Samayil pressed forward aggressively, leaving gaps at the back, Seeb capitalised in the second minute of stoppage time.

Their new Ivorian striker, Mamadou Soro, a recent transfer window signing, exploited a defensive mix-up between the backline and the keeper to snatch the ball and calmly slot home. It was his first official goal for Seeb, sealing a 3–1 victory and underlining the team’s promising start to the competition.

SHORTTAKES



Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova in action during her semifinal match against Czech Republic's Katerina Siniakova. — Reuters

SWIATEK FACES ALEXANDROVA FOR KOREA OPEN TITLE

SEOUL: World number two Iga Swiatek stormed into the final of the rain-hit Korea Open on Saturday, beating Barbora Krejickova in the quarterfinals and Maya Joint in the semis, with the Pole set to take on Ekaterina Alexandrova in the title clash.

Swiatek began the day in style, hammering twice Grand Slam singles champion Barbora Krejickova 6-0 6-3 in a quarterfinal rescheduled from Friday due to persistent rain and the 24-year-old returned shortly afterwards to sweep aside Joint 6-0 6-2.

"I'll just focus on myself and the goals that I had before and continue to do what I was doing throughout the tournament, because it's been working," Swiatek said before she found out that she would face second-seeded Russian Alexandrova on Sunday.

"The final is supposed to be the toughest and it always produces a different kind of stress, so I'm just happy that I've already played solid matches here."

Australian teenager Joint, who earlier downed Clara Tauson 6-0 6-3, found herself in all kinds of trouble against an ultra-focused Swiatek and tamely surrendered the first set on Centre Court in only 25 minutes.

The top seed briefly wobbled in the second set to hand Joint the opportunity to break, but she quickly reset to go 3-1 up and never looked back from there as the 24-year-old wrapped up the contest with a powerful smash at the net.

Swiatek, whose rower father Tomasz represented Poland in the men's quadruple sculls event at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, is hoping to mark her first appearance in the South Korean capital with her third trophy of the season.

The world number two is also looking to close the gap on top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka, who pulled out of the China Open scheduled to begin in Beijing next week after sustaining an injury during her run to the US Open title.

Up next for six-times Grand Slam champion Swiatek is Alexandrova, who defeated Katerina Siniakova 6-4 6-2 in the other last-four encounter.

Czech Siniakova earlier reached the semifinals with a 6-1 7-5 victory over Suzan Lamens after Alexandrova advanced following a 6-2 6-3 win over Ella Seidel in other quarterfinal matches postponed due to rain. — Reuters



Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova in action during her semifinal match against Czech Republic's Katerina Siniakova. — Reuters

Liverpool beat Everton 2-1 in Merseyside derby

LIVERPOOL held off a spirited Everton fightback to claim a 2-1 Premier League victory in a tense Merseyside derby at Anfield on Saturday, preserving their perfect start to the season and moving further ahead atop the table after five games.

First-half goals from Ryan Gravenberch and Hugo Ekitike gave Arne Slot's men a commanding lead, but Idrissa Gueye's second-half strike ensured a nervy finish for the hosts, who have now won all five league matches to open their campaign. Everton dropped one spot to seventh in the table after their second loss of the season.

Gravenberch struck in the 10th minute when Mohamed Salah sent a ball over the top that the Dutch international met on the bounce for a superb finish, hooking his shot beyond the outstretched hands of goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

"I'm really happy with the goal," Gravenberch said. "Last season I did not score a lot so I'm really happy, especially in a Merseyside derby.

"We know if Mo (Salah) gets the ball he has the incredible pass and we know if someone is on the ball side they have to go through and the space is coming in behind. So I saw it, and I went in behind, and yeah I did it."

Close-season signing Ekitike, who started ahead of Liverpool's British record signing Alexander Isak, doubled the lead in the 29th when the Frenchman took one touch from Gravenberch's pass before finishing through Pickford's legs. But Everton grew into the game and Gueye pulled one back in the 58th when he lashed a shot into the far left corner after Iliman Ndiaye had cleverly cut back Jack Grealish's cross. The nerves were palpable over the final few minutes of an entertaining afternoon in lashing rain as Everton parked in Liverpool's end but, try as they might, the Toffees could not find the back of the net.

Liverpool had 11 shots to Everton's nine.

LIVERPOOL'S EKITIKE ENJOYS WINNING TOUGH GAME

"A very good feeling," Ekitike said. "We knew it was going to be a tough game - it was. We had to fight until the last minute. But yeah, I'm happy, proud. It was good test for me. We just have to keep going."

Winger Jack Grealish, who has been excellent since his loan move to Everton from Manchester City, stopped what looked to be a sure goal in the 73rd minute when he blocked Ibrahima Konate's blistering header



Liverpool's Cody Gakpo in action with Everton's Jake O'Brien. — Reuters

with his chest. "It was what I expected, coming here it was hostile, faster," Grealish said. "I don't think we played well in the first half, we came in at halftime and had a chat with the manager. "Frustrating because if we had pressed like that from the start it would have been a different game. In the end we couldn't get that last goal." Grealish and Everton boss David Moyes made a beeline for the officials after the final whistle to have a word. Grealish was

shown a yellow card before Pickford pushed him away. Grealish was angry after Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall was shown a yellow card for taking a quick free kick. "We want to get the game going, we're losing the game," Grealish said. "I've never heard of that in my life." Liverpool needed last-gasp goals in their four previous league wins along with their 3-2 Champions League victory over Atletico Madrid on Wednesday, but they stormed out of the gate on Saturday and needed no late-game heroics. — Reuters

US defeat Britain to face Italy in Billie Jean King Cup final

SHENZHEN, China: Comeback victories from Jessica Pegula and Emma Navarro against Great Britain sent the United States through to their first Billie Jean King Cup final since 2018 in Shenzhen on Saturday. After Navarro opened proceedings with a hard-fought 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over Sonay Kartal, Pegula sealed the tie for the Americans with a 3-6, 6-4, 6-2 win over Katie Boulter. The victory means USA have now reached the BJK Cup final for a record 31st time and they will take on defending champions Italy in Sunday's final for a shot at adding a 19th title to their storied history in the competition.

"It's the first time I will be in the final," said Pegula, who made her BJK Cup debut for the USA in 2019. "I think everybody on the team it'll be our first time. So it'll be a new experience for us but there's no one else I'd rather share it with. We're excited to be back and hopefully take the title." The seventh-ranked Pegula and 18th-ranked Navarro were considered heavy favourites in their respective singles matches but Boulter and Kartal gave the American pair a run for their



Hailey Baptiste of the US celebrates after Jessica Pegula of the US won her singles match against Britain's Katie Boulter. — Reuters

money. Boulter, ranked 55 in the world, entered the clash holding an impressive 14-6 win-loss record in BJK Cup singles matches, and with a 1-0 head-to-head record against Pegula. The 29-year old Briton enjoyed a blistering start, breaking Pegula twice to grab a one-set lead in 36 minutes. The duo traded breaks in the second before Pegula eked out another advantage to level the match. NEVER GIVE UP As Boulter's error count rose, Pegula found her game in the

decider as she surged ahead 5-2 and wrapped up the semifinal in just under two hours. "I think watching my teammate Emma win earlier definitely motivated me a lot and inspired me a lot, the way she turned that match around," said Pegula. "If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have been in such a good position to win the match today and to beat Great Britain, so honestly that motivated me a lot. "I had to just find a way to compete. I felt like my level wasn't there, she was playing at a high level and then I was able to turn it

around there." Earlier at the Shenzhen Bay Sports Centre, Navarro rallied back from a set and break down to overcome a stubborn Kartal. A see-saw first set witnessed five breaks of serve but it was Kartal who managed to consolidate her advantage as she grabbed a one-set lead in 37 minutes. Navarro had to recover from a break deficit twice in the second set before she upped her level, utilising some sharp angles and clever shot-making, to break Kartal in game 10 and even up the contest. The 24-year old American could not consolidate her first break of the deciding set but struck again to complete a crucial opening point for her team. "I feel a ton of pride playing for my country," said Navarro. "It means the world to me to be able to have the American flag on my chest. I never give up anyway, but I'll especially never give up when I have the American flag on my chest." This is the third time in the last four years that Great Britain have lost in the semifinals of the BJK Cup. — AFP

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



India's Abhishek Sharma plays a shot during the Asia Cup 2025 Twenty20 international cricket match between India and Oman at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi. — AFP

INDIA BEAT OMAN IN ASIA CUP T20

ABU DHABI: World champions India overcame a gutsy Oman team to win the last group match of the Asia Cup by 21 runs on Friday and stay unbeaten in the T20 tournament.

India had already qualified for the Super Four stage and posted 188-8 after they elected to bat first at Abu Dhabi.

Oman — ranked 20th in world T20 rankings — put up a spirited batting show and finished on 167-4 after top knocks from Aamir Kaleem, who made 64, and Hammad Mirza, who hit 51.

The left-right batting pair of Kaleem and Mirza put on 93 runs for the second wicket and attempted to pull off the chase with some late boundaries that gave India the scare.

Hardik Pandya broke the stand with a stunning outfield catch to dismiss Kaleem off Harshit Rana and then sent back Mirza with his pace bowling in the next over.

Left-arm quick Arshdeep Singh snared the fourth wicket of the innings and his 100th in T20 internationals — the first Indian bowler to reach the century mark.

Earlier, wicketkeeper-batsman Sanju Samson top-scored with 56 and his second-wicket partnership with explosive opener Abhishek Sharma, who made 38 off 14 balls, lay the platform for India's total.

Oman struck regular blows in their first meeting with the reigning T20 World Cup winners.

Shah Faisal, fellow left-arm quick Jiten Ramanandi and left-arm spinner Kaleem took two wickets reach.

India and Pakistan moved into the Super Four from Group A and face each again on Sunday, a week after India's players refused to shake hands with their neighbours after victory in a group match.

Sri Lanka clash with Bangladesh in the first match of the Super Four on Saturday after the two teams made the next stage from Group B. — AFP



Wanyonyi, Chebet deliver gold for Africa at the worlds

EMMANUEL WANYONYI and Beatrice Chebet made it a memorable night for Kenya at the world championships on Saturday as they produced outstanding performances to win the men's 800 metres and women's 5,000m respectively.

Just over a year ago the duo left Paris as Olympic champions, while Chebet won both the 5,000 and 10,000m golds.

On Saturday, in front of over 58,000 spectators at Japan's National Stadium, she achieved the same feat, beating her idol Faith Kipyegon to become only the third woman to do the distance double at a world championships.

Wanyonyi's blisteringly fast race was watched by retired Kenyan 800m legend David Rudisha, who sat beside another man who knows a thing or two about the two-lap race, two-time Olympic silver medallist and World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe.

Rudisha produced one of the all-time great Olympic performances when he broke the world record to win gold at the 2012 London Games.

There was never any question of that happening in Saturday's final, Wanyonyi winning in a championship record time of 1min 41.86sec.

However, Rudisha has all but anointed the 21-year-old former cattle herder as the man most likely to set a new record.

"Maybe I will start to think about the world record," Wonyonyi said.

"I also want to win gold in Los Angeles in

2028. That's the biggest goal.

"I met David Rudisha yesterday. He told me just to take a rest and focus, and everything is possible."

Chebet enjoys a close friendship with Kipyegon, who is six years her senior, but on the track she is not over-awed by one of the legends of athletics.

Indeed Chebet has every chance of being accorded similar status, given her increasingly impressive gold medals tally.

Kipyegon, despite her disappointment at failing to repeat her world 1,500m/5000m double from the 2023 Budapest championships, embraced Chebet warmly at the finish.

"Going home with two gold medals makes me really happy," said Chebet.

"Me and Faith have been friends for a long time. We motivate each other and I am really pleased with our performances."

Kipyegon, who retained the 1,500m title earlier in the week, said Chebet "is the best".

"I'm now going to have some sleep and go back home and enjoy some time with my daughter," she added.

MY WEDDING RING

The women's 4x100m relay final on Sunday may come to be remembered more for the handing over of the baton from 38-year-old Jamaican legend Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce to the new queen of the sprints, America's Melissa Jefferson-Wooden.

However, Fraser-Pryce will hope to bow out after almost two decades at the top

by denying Jefferson-Wooden a third gold medal, which would equal her achievement in Moscow in 2013.

The USA men's 4x100m relay teams have gained a reputation down the years for fouling up baton exchanges — the latest example came at the Olympics last year.

This time though it was not them but their great rivals Jamaica who came up short as Ryiem Forde's handover to 100m silver medallist Kishane Thompson on the anchor leg went awry. The two did not exchange a word as they walked the 90 metres or so to the line in a heat won by Olympic champions Canada. Anna Hall exchanged world silver for gold in the heptathlon, but it was Kate O'Connor's performance that caught the eye as the 24-year-old took silver, a first ever in the event for Ireland.

In fact, it was just Ireland's seventh medal in championships history and their first since 2013.

"I knew that I was always going to be in with a shot of a medal," said the Northern Ireland-born O'Connor.

"But it's the one thing being in with a shot and another actually going out and doing it."

Caio Bonfim will be bringing a gold medal home to Brazil, winning the men's 20 km walk after finishing second in the 35 km walk last Saturday.

However, the 34-year-old will be returning home without one item he left Brazil with.

"I lost my wedding ring in the third kilometre. I believe my wife will be OK because I won today," he said. — AFP

Verstappen claims dramatic pole for F1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix

BAKU: Max Verstappen put Red Bull on pole position for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Saturday after McLaren's Formula One leader Oscar Piastri and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc crashed out of a qualifying session with a record six red flags.

Carlos Sainz put Williams on the front row alongside the four-times world champion on a tough day for runaway leaders McLaren, hoping to clinch the constructors' title for a second year in a row on Sunday and an unprecedented seven rounds remaining.

Piastri, last year's winner in Baku, qualified ninth without setting a time in the final phase after his biggest mistake so far in a campaign otherwise remarkably free of errors.

"I think the win is ambitious but

let's wait and see," said Piastri. "The car has been quick this weekend and hopefully we can use that to make progress."

Teammate and title rival Lando Norris, 31 points behind, will start only seventh after going breathtakingly close to hitting the wall and missing a big chance to put distance between himself and the Australian.

Racing Bulls' Liam Lawson qualified a surprise third with Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli fourth in an all-rookie second row on a grid with a distinctly different look even if the pole was a second in a row for Verstappen after Monza.

VERY DIFFICULT SESSION

"It was a very difficult session. In the final lap, you just have to send it,"



said Verstappen after a last effort that was 0.478 quicker than Sainz.

"I wasn't even on the best tyres that I wanted — because of all the red flags you basically run out of tyres."

Leclerc had been bidding for a fifth successive Baku pole but it all went wrong when the Monegasque speared into the barriers on a track made slippery by rain.

Only three drivers, with Sainz leading Lawson, had set a time at that point of the final phase.

Ferrari's seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton qualified a disappointing 12th — after the optimism of going fastest on Friday — with Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso 11th.

"I honestly thought I was going to be shooting for pole today, so it's kind

of a bit of a shock," said Hamilton.

FIRST PHASE STOPPED THREE TIMES

The first phase was halted three times, with Alex Albon hitting the wall in his Williams and then Nico Hulkenberg going straight into the barriers at turn four and smashing the front wing and floor of his Sauber. Argentine rookie Franco Colapinto, his seat for next season in doubt, then crashed his Alpine heavily in the closing seconds — repairs to the barrier delaying the start of the second phase.

Hulkenberg's crash brought out the red flags with six minutes and 36 seconds remaining, putting pressure on Antonelli as the only driver still without a time. — Reuters

BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES



Credit granted to the private sector rose by 6.4% to RO 27.9 billion by the end of July 2025.

BANKING SECTOR CREDIT TOPS RO 34 BILLION

MUSCAT: The total outstanding credit extended by the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 8.9%, reaching RO 34.1 billion at the end of July 2025.

According to data issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), credit granted to the private sector rose by 6.4% to RO 27.9 billion by the end of July 2025.

Figures on the distribution of credit to the private sector showed that non-financial corporations accounted for the largest share at 46.6%, followed by individuals at 44.8%. The remaining credit was distributed to financial corporations at 5.7% and other sectors at 2.9%.

Meanwhile, total deposits in the banking sector increased by 6.1% to RO 32.9 billion at the end of July 2025.

Within this total, private sector deposits with the banking system rose by 5.8% to RO 21.9 billion.

The distribution of the private sector's total deposit base showed that individuals accounted for the largest share at around 51.0%, followed by non-financial corporations (29.4%) and financial corporations (17.6%), with the remaining 2.3% spread across other sectors. — ONA

Silica Sand Project begins production in Mahout

MINERALS Development Oman (MDO), in collaboration with the Earth Sciences Consultancy Centre, has announced the commencement of production at the Silica Sand Project located in the Wilayat of Mahout, Al Wusta Governorate, within exploration block F51.

This strategic milestone aims to support the growth of Oman's mining sector and strengthen downstream industries in the Sultanate of Oman.

The project covers an area of approximately 5 square kilometres, with confirmed silica sand reserves estimated at around 47 million tonnes. The current phase focuses on the production and supply of raw silica to both local and regional markets, addressing the growing demand and reducing reliance on imports. This will further establish Oman as a reliable regional supplier of this strategic industrial mineral.

This initiative aligns with MDO's broader strategy to foster partnerships with the private sector, develop national mineral resources and advance value chain integration.

In future phases, this partnership plans to develop a primary silica processing facility to enhance product quality and attract high-tech industries such as semiconductors, glass manufacturing, chemical processing and metallurgical applications. All these efforts will contribute to the development of sustainable local value chains and advanced industrial growth in Oman.

The Earth Sciences Consultancy Centre will lead the operational and developmental aspects of the project, including investment and production management, while MDO will serve as the resource owner and overall project overseer. According to the approved development plan, initial production capacity is expected to reach 100,000 tonnes annually, with a purity level of approximately 98%.

Eng Matar bin Salim al Badi,



The current phase focuses on the production and supply of raw silica to both local and regional markets, addressing the growing demand and reducing reliance on imports.

DR MOHAMMED BIN HILAL AL KINDI

By developing raw silica and expanding into value-added products, we aim to unlock new markets locally and regionally; and firmly establish Oman as a trusted supplier of critical materials for advanced industries.

CEO of Minerals Development Oman, emphasised that the commencement of production at the Mahout Silica Sand Project represents a "significant strategic step" in strengthening the mining sector and supporting national industries. He noted that the project goes beyond mere raw material extraction, representing a long-term investment in Oman's economy and reflecting MDO's commitment to empowering Omani companies and fostering sustainable private sector growth.

He added, "By developing raw silica and expanding into value-added products, we aim to unlock new markets locally and regionally; and firmly establish Oman as a trusted supplier of critical materials for advanced industries". Dr Mohammed bin Hilal al Kindi, CEO of the Earth Sciences Consultancy Centre, stated

that the centre will lead project operations and development to ensure optimal economic and industrial returns for the Sultanate of Oman. He described the project as a sound investment in Oman's natural resources and a platform for sustainable industrial growth.

Silica is a fundamental raw material in modern industries, used in the manufacturing of glass, display screens, semiconductors and various advanced materials — making it a strategic resource that supports industrial and technological innovation.

Minerals Development Oman was established with a clear strategic vision to advance the mining sector in the Sultanate of Oman, increase its contribution to economic and social growth, create job opportunities, build local expertise, support SMEs and enhance in-country value. — ONA

Masdar-led consortium wins bid for 500 MW Ibri III Solar Project

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 20

The consortium of Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar), Korea Midland Power (KOMIPO) and Al Khadra Partners (Oman) has been named the winner of an international competitive tender for the establishment of a new 500 MW solar Independent Power Project (IPP) at the Wilayat of Ibri in the Sultanate of Oman's Al Dhahirah Governorate.

A Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for the Ibri III IPP is scheduled to be signed tomorrow, Monday, September 22, 2025 between the winning consortium and Nama Power & Water Procurement (PWP) — the sole national agency overseeing the procurement of new capacity. The event will be held under the auspices of Eng Salim bin Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

Scheduled for commercial launch in the first quarter of 2027, the Ibri III Solar IPP is



They are key to Oman's strategic goal to secure 30 per cent of its electricity requirements from renewables by 2030, rising to 60-70 per cent by 2040.

set to be the fourth large-scale solar energy project prepped for implementation in Oman. It will come up on a 10 million m² site

adjoining the 500 MW capacity Ibri II Solar IPP — the country's first solar PV scheme that came into operation in January 2022.

The Masdar-led consortium led a field of four contender for the Ibri III Solar IPP, estimated to cost RO 155 million. Also competing

for the contract were ACWA Power and TotalEnergies Renewables; EDF Renouvelables and Korean Western Power (KOWEPO); and Sembcorp Utilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

A flurry of wind and other solar-based projects are in the pipeline for implementation across the Sultanate of Oman over the next six years.

They are key to Oman's strategic goal to secure 30 per cent of its electricity requirements from renewables by 2030, rising to 60-70 per cent by 2040 and reaching ultimately 100 per cent by 2050. In capacity terms, Oman's renewable energy capacity is anticipated to reach 8 gigawatts by 2030. At least five Wind IPPs with an aggregate capacity of around 1 GW are planned for location in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Al Duqm, Mahout, Harweel and Sadah. Also envisioned is a swathe of new Solar IPPs with a capacity aggregating around 4.5 GW over the next six years.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES REINFORCES INNOVATION AT SPE HYDRAULIC FRACTURING CONFERENCE

Abraj Energy Services, Oman’s leading oil and gas services provider, announced its participation as the Official Sponsor of the Hydraulic Fracturing Technology Conference and Exhibition, scheduled to take place from September 23 to 25 in Muscat.

The company will showcase its pioneering expertise and operational excellence in hydraulic fracturing, further strengthening its role as a trusted regional and international partner. As the first company in the Mena region to introduce fully integrated fracturing services, Abraj has set new benchmarks in efficiency, innovation and safety. With a 33 per cent share of Oman’s fracturing market, the company has delivered more than 399 jobs, achieving world-class results with a 98.6 per cent efficiency rate and maintaining five consecutive years without a lost-time injury. These milestones reflect Abraj’s trusted role in providing safer, smarter and more sustainable energy solutions.

During the conference, Abraj experts will also present a series of technical papers, sharing knowledge, best practices and innovative approaches that are shaping the future of well stimulation in the region. In addition to SPE, Abraj will also participate as an official sponsor of the MEIRA Annual Conference 2025, the region’s largest and most influential investor relations gathering, taking place on September 24–25 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat. Through this strategic sponsorship, Abraj reaffirms its commitment to strengthening investor confidence in its long-term growth journey and reinforcing Oman’s capital market presence on the regional stage.

Football legend Florent Malouda visits project offices of The Sustainable City — Yiti

MUSCAT: Football icon Florent Malouda, former Chelsea and French national team star, visited The Sustainable City — Yiti alongside Ahmad and Mohammed Adlouni, founders of Prime Talent Sports Academy (PTSA). The delegation was welcomed by Mahmoud Shehada, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, The Sustainable City — Yiti, at the project’s offices near Muscat.

During the visit, Malouda and the delegation were introduced to The Sustainable City — Yiti’s masterplan and innovative design, which integrates sustainable housing, education, leisure and wellness within a future ready urban environment. The presentation also highlighted the state-of-the-art sports and wellbeing infrastructure, featuring a wide range of indoor and outdoor facilities, including jogging and cycling tracks, swimming pools, multi-purpose arenas, sports fields and dedicated wellness zones



Florent Malouda, former Chelsea and French national team star, visited The Sustainable City — Yiti

— all designed to international standards to foster community health, active lifestyles and social engagement. The delegation later toured parts of the project site, gaining insight into how sustainability and innovation are being embedded across every aspect

of the development. Speaking after the visit, Florent Malouda said: “I have seen first-hand the impact of The Sustainable City in Dubai and it is impressive to witness how this vision is being expanded here in Yiti on an even larger scale. This project embodies the best of what sustainable living has to offer, while making sports and wellbeing accessible to everyone. Having such a wide range of facilities all within walking distance in one community is remarkable. It encourages healthier lifestyles and inspires young people to be more active, engaged and ambitious”.

PTSA, known for empowering youth through football training programmes rooted in professional coaching and holistic development, already partners closely with The Sustainable City — Dubai, where it supports youth tournaments, talent development and community-driven sporting events.

MSX Index resumes upward trend on local buying

MUSCAT, SEPT 20

THE MUSCAT Stock Exchange (MSX) main index resumed its upward trajectory last week after a one-week decline, supported by gains in banking, energy and industrial shares as local funds and institutional investors moved towards buying.

By the end of last week’s trading, the main index closed at 5,123 points, up by 41 points. The industrial sector index posted the highest increase, rising by 34 points, while the services sector index gained 18 points and the financial sector index added 17 points. In contrast, the Sharia index dipped slightly, closing just under one point lower at 471 points.

Several stock gains helped push the main index back above the 5,100-point level after it had slipped below it in the previous week. Investors focused on leading shares such as Bank Muscat, Sohar International Bank, National Bank of Oman, Al Safwah Foods, Salalah Mills, OQ Gas Networks, Asyad Shipping and OQ Basic Industries, alongside energy firms including Al Anwar Energy, Al Batinah Power and Al Suwadi Power.

The rise in share prices lifted the MSX’s market capitalisation back to the RO 30 billion mark, ending the week at RO 30.143 billion, representing weekly gains of more than RO 200 million. Local institutional funds and investment firms shifted towards buying, absorbing a wave of selling by individual investors. Trading data showed that Omani individual investors’ sales accounted for 23.4% of the total value of trades, against purchases of 17.8%. Local institutional investors, meanwhile, accounted for 76.5% of purchases, cutting their sales to 71.1% of the total, which further bolstered market gains in recent weeks.

Weekly trading value stood at RO 79.779 million compared with about RO 82 million the week before. The number of executed transactions increased to 16,427 from 16,328 in the previous week.



By the end of last week’s trading, the main index closed at 5,123 points, up by 41 points.

OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) topped the list of most traded companies by value with RO 16.5 million, representing 20.6% of the total. Sohar International Bank ranked second with RO 14.9 million, followed by OQ Basic Industries with RO 12 million, or 15.1% of the total traded value. During the week, 33 securities advanced, 34 declined and 24 remained unchanged. Oman Packaging led the gainers, rising 10.4% to close at 158 baisas. Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing ranked second with an 8% gain to 990 baisas, while Al Anwar Energy climbed 6.4% to 115 baisas. On the losing side, Dhofar Food and Investment recorded the steepest drop, down 10% to 63 baisas. Fincorp fell 8.7% to 42 baisas and Raysut Cement retreated 7.6% to 85 baisas. In the bonds and sukuk market, Liva

mandatory convertible bonds (issued in 2024) led the gainers, up 1.4% to close at 71 baisas. Ominvest mandatory convertible bonds (issued in 2024) saw the biggest decline, falling 10.5% to 76 baisas. Total trading in the bonds and sukuk market was limited at RO 30,000, down from about RO 87,000 in the previous week. On the corporate front, OQ Gas Networks announced that its Board of Directors has proposed distributing interim cash dividends of 5.6 baisas per share for the first half of the current year, with the proposal to be presented at the ordinary general meeting scheduled for October. Earlier in March, OQ Gas Networks distributed cash dividends of 4.92 baisas per share. Its share closed last week at 162 baisas, up 4 baisas, with a market capitalisation of RO 701.5 million. — ONA

Duqm Economic Forum 2025 to focus on green industry

MUSCAT, SEPT 20

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has announced preparations for the second edition of the Duqm Economic Forum, set to take place on October 27–28. The event will convene global thought leaders, industry experts and senior representatives from leading international corporations to position Al Duqm as a regional powerhouse for sustainable industry, innovation and investment. Building on the success of its inaugural edition, the 2025 Forum will serve as a strategic

platform to explore high-impact investment opportunities, forge new partnerships and showcase Al Duqm’s emergence as a global hub for future-ready industries. Held under the banner of Oman Vision 2040, the Forum will spotlight Al Duqm’s strategic location, advanced infrastructure and its growing role in driving economic diversification. This year’s agenda will focus on green industries, advanced logistics, smart cities and AI-powered solutions, offering investors direct access to the Zone’s most promising projects and long-term development plans. The Forum will also highlight Al



Duqm’s positioning as a gateway to international trade and a regional centre for industrial innovation, reinforcing its appeal to global investors seeking sustainable growth and strategic connectivity. The Forum coincides with the rollout of the Duqm 2025–2030 Strategy, launched last March to

accelerate investment attraction and infrastructure optimisation. The strategy aims to establish Al Duqm as a preferred destination for renewable energy, sustainable manufacturing and integrated lifestyle development, while enhancing tourism, attracting international partners and driving institutional excellence. OPAZ emphasised that the Forum will serve as a pivotal moment to chart the future of investment in Al Duqm. It seeks to attract global capital, fast-track strategic projects and solidify Al Duqm’s role as a centre for next-generation industries and global supply chains.

OPAZ also reaffirmed its commitment to balancing industrial growth with environmental stewardship — applying the highest sustainability standards and promoting social responsibility through job creation and advanced training programmes for national talent. With wide interest expected from investors, experts and stakeholders, Duqm Economic Forum 2025 is set to become a leading platform for shaping the future of green investment and innovation — cementing Al Duqm’s status as a strategic destination for a sustainable, knowledge-driven economy.

WEAKENINGDEMAND



A view shows an oil pump jack outside Almeteyevsk, in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia. — Reuters

OIL PRICES SLIP
AS ROBUST SUPPLY
OUTWEIGHS
FED RATE CUT

NEW YORK: Oil prices declined on Friday as concerns over abundant supplies and weakening demand overshadowed the US Federal Reserve’s first interest rate cut of the year.

Brent crude futures settled at \$66.68 per barrel, down 76 cents or 1.1%, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures finished at \$62.68, down 89 cents or 1.4%. Despite the drop, both benchmarks marked their second consecutive weekly gain.

Analysts attributed the decline to robust oil supplies and OPEC’s scaling back of production cuts. Andrew Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates, noted that oil supplies remain strong and that OPEC is reducing production cuts.

Concerns over demand were also heightened by a 4 million-barrel rise in US distillate stockpiles, along with signs of a slowing US economy, including softening employment data and a sharp drop in single-family homebuilding.

The Fed cut its policy rate by a quarter percentage point on Wednesday, indicating more cuts could follow. However, some analysts, including John Kilduff of Again Capital, said modest reductions may not sufficiently boost oil demand. “The Fed’s move is not translating into growth for the crude market due to underlying fundamentals”, he noted.

Refinery maintenance season and seasonal turnarounds are expected to further temper demand, keeping prices under pressure in the near term. — Reuters

RO 116m worth pacts
signed at Comex 2025

THE TOTAL VALUE of agreements signed by government institutions, local companies and international firms during Comex 2025 reached about RO 116 million, through the signing of more than 150 agreements. This marked a 45% increase compared with the total contracts signed at Comex 2024, which stood at RO 80 million.

The agreements included memoranda of understanding and cooperation between various government entities and local companies — particularly small and medium enterprises — as well as international firms, to implement technology projects and provide digital services in fields such as artificial intelligence, sustainable energy for data centres, digital solutions, cybersecurity services and other technology-related sectors.

Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, said the notable growth in the total value of agreements at Comex 2025 reflects the strong interest of both local and international investors in Oman’s digital sector. He noted that the exhibition has become a platform to enhance partnerships and cooperation between the public and private sectors.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Dr Al Shaithani added that these results reinforce Oman’s position as an attractive



More than 140 tech startups took part, alongside over 200 government and private institutions and international delegations in technology and digital transformation.

destination for technology investments and strategic partnerships. They also confirm the ministry’s continued commitment to supporting digital innovation, developing digital infrastructure, enhancing national capabilities and providing a supportive environment for local and global companies. This contributes to driving Oman’s digital transformation, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and to building a sustainable digital economy. He further

stressed that the agreements will enhance the contribution of the digital economy to GDP, accelerate the pace of digital transformation in Oman and serve as a cornerstone in building an integrated and attractive digital ecosystem for global investment. This, he said, will open the door to broad opportunities for business growth and the creation of quality jobs in this vital sector.

The exhibition recorded unprecedented statistics, with more than 90,000 visitors — a

10% increase compared with last year — reflecting growing interest in the sector. More than 140 tech startups took part, alongside over 200 government and private institutions and international delegations in technology and digital transformation.

The accompanying events included more than 80 workshops, with the participation of over 70 speakers and the launch of more than 40 products, innovations and services. — ONA

Dollar extends post-Fed rebound; sterling hit by fiscal worries

NEW YORK: The dollar strengthened on Friday, extending its rebound against most major currencies, as traders reviewed the near-term outlook after the Federal Reserve cut interest rates this week but signalled gradual easing in the future.

The US Dollar Currency Index, which tracks the greenback against six major peers, rose 0.3% to 97.662. The gauge, which fell 1% on Monday and Tuesday on expectations the Fed might flag a rapid series of rate cuts, was about flat for the week. On Wednesday, the Fed delivered an expected rate cut but signalled little urgency to lower borrowing costs quickly in the coming months. The Fed’s rate forecast, or the so-called “dot plot”, showed projections of two more rate reductions this year. “It’s really a week of two halves”, said Marc Chandler, chief market strategist at Bannockburn Forex. “The votes, the actual dots, were not as dovish as the statement and the concerns about the labour market suggested”. The US currency may have room to rebound further after facing selling pressure in the days ahead of the Fed decision.

“What we’re telling our clients is that this is just a counter-trend move. If you have to sell dollars, you’ll have a better level shortly”, Chandler said.

STERLING SLIDE

Sterling fell on Friday after Britain’s borrowing surged past official forecasts, further complicating the country’s fiscal outlook, while the yen firmed after the Bank of Japan held rates steady, with dissent on the board.

The pound was one of the worst performers among



Illustration shows US dollar and Chinese Yuan banknotes

G10 currencies, mirroring investors’ concerns that British finance minister Rachel Reeves may not be able to keep her budget under control.

The currency eased 0.6% to \$1.3468, on pace for its biggest two-day drop since early April. “Despite a better reading from UK August

retail sales data, poor UK government borrowing data have highlighted the difficulties Chancellor Reeves faces in delivering the UK budget in November”, said Jane Foley, head FX strategist at Rabobank. Data published early on Friday showed British retail sales rose by a stronger-than-expected 0.5%

in August, helped by sunny weather, but sales growth in July was revised slightly down. The borrowing figures — the highest for the first five months of a financial year since 2020 — could pave the way for further tax increases.

Even before Friday’s data, Reeves had been expected to announce new tax increases in her November 26 budget to stay on track to meet her fiscal rules and avoid fresh upheaval in financial markets.

BOJ DISSENT UNDERPINS YEN

In the BOJ, the unexpected dissent by two board members against the decision to hold rates steady unsettled investors and shifted their focus back on how soon the BOJ will next raise rates. “This was unexpected and suggests that perhaps policy rate hikes may be coming

sooner than anticipated”, said David Chao, global market strategist for Asia-Pacific at Invesco in Singapore. The Japanese central bank’s next meeting on October 30 will be the “best chance” for a rate hike for the rest of 2025, he added.

After a volatile session, the yen was nearly unchanged on the day at 147.975 against the dollar.

Investors remain unsure whether the BOJ’s policy path will be affected by the October 4 leadership race in Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party to replace outgoing Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. The New Zealand dollar extended its slump from the prior session, falling 0.4%, a day after a strikingly weak reading on the economy pushed yields sharply lower as markets ramped up wagers for bigger rate cuts ahead. — Reuters

HUGE BOUNTY UP

Trump says Xi approved TikTok deal



US President Donald Trump said on Friday that he and Chinese President Xi Jinping have approved a deal for TikTok’s US operations, though details are still being finalised. The agreement would see US investors, including Oracle and Silver Lake, take majority control, preventing Chinese influence, while ByteDance retains a minority stake. The Wall Street Journal reported the US government could receive several billion dollars as part of the transaction. — dpa

CYBER ATTACK

Major European airports disrupted



Major European airports, including Brussels, Berlin and London Heathrow, faced cyber-related disruptions on Saturday, affecting check-in and baggage drop systems, Collins Aerospace reported. Brussels Airport cancelled at least 10 flights and delayed 17 others, operating only manual check-ins. Heathrow and Berlin also warned of delays due to technical issues with Collins Aerospace’s MUSE software. — AFP

EXPENSIVE STAFF

US firms rush to respond to H1B visa fee



Major US companies are advising foreign employees to stay in the country following President Trump’s surprise \$100,000 annual fee on H1B visas, up from just a few thousand dollars. Tech giants Amazon, Microsoft and Meta, along with JPMorgan, have urged staff abroad to return within 24 hours, Business Insider reported. The new fee raises concerns that hiring skilled foreign workers could become prohibitively expensive. — dpa

OPINION

Actionable strategies key to Oman’s future outlook



DR HILAL AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert

OMAN AS OF 2025 has a recovering economy due to the ambitious goal reforms set. At the same time, new hurdles posed have to be grappled with as well. The Tenth Five-Year Development Plan for 2021-2025 has greatly increased the pace of development by providing insight and so, the focus of policymakers now has to be on capturing the growth from the oil sector, while also maintaining the non-oil sector growth, to be able to provide sustainable growth for Oman Vision 2040.

MODEST GROWTH, OIL REVIVAL
The same sources expect Oman’s real GDP to grow by 2.2% in 2025, up from 1.7% in 2024. While the growth is modest, certain forecasting agencies expect a growth potential of 2.6 to 2.8% if the oil sector rebounds in addition to the consistent growth of the non-oil sector.

The most significant driver of this recovery is oil. While the oil sector is expected to grow by 1.3% in 2025 after 2024’s 3% contraction, the oil sector’s growth contribution to the economy is expected to rise.

DIVERSIFICATION PUSH
Oman is making efforts to balance the oil sector and reduce the reliance on oil. Non-oil sectors growth is forecasted to be 2.7% which is lower than previous years,

but is crucial to building an economy with resilience.

Market outlooks show promise in the following areas:

- Tourism has attracted foreign visitors, the construction of luxury hotels and integrated resorts investments.
- The developments of manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries and port logistics has spurred driven investments in infrastructure development and special economic zones.
- Targets of Oman’s sustainability goals, such as the energy transition and development of renewable energy and nascent green hydrogen, pose promising opportunities.

FISCAL AND POLICY REFORMS
Sustained economic Oman achieved stability through multiple reforms:

- Directly impacting only 1 per cent, the Royal Decree issued on 2025 to impose a 5% personal income tax starting 2028 for individuals earning RO 42,000, has broad implications for revenue base diversification and oil income reliance erosion.
- Cautious budgets, rational deficit spending and rein tracks conservatively assume oil price revenue as a Fiscal Discipline. The government spending, investment outlines and the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan steer.
- Augmented governance, sounder the

banking sector and better investment prospects are expected from central bank and banking law along with these revised regulations.

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS AND RISKS
Subsidies and the relatively stable of the global commodity with expected inflation rate holding below 1.5% for 2025.

REGARDLESS, OMAN IS STILL UNDER CERTAIN RISKS:

- Oil price fluctuations still constitute an external risk. Unanticipated downturns in global demand or supply disturbances can easily throw a fiscal policy off balance.
- An economic downturn, supply side limitations, or increased international monetary conditions may impede investment or erode foreign currency resources.
- Pressure on employment opportunities, particularly on Omanis and equitable distributive benefits of growth pose persistent obstacles. Social inclusion, education and skills development align to fulfil labour market shortages.
- Water scarcity, climate change and other environmental determinants of growth pose easier challenges. Oman is investigating ways of using smart water systems and other renewable energy sources to meet growing demand.

Looking ahead, Oman remains committed to advancing towards Oman Vision 2040 policies. An evolving economy, with non-oil derivatives infrastructure, is predicted for the remainder of the country’s Tenth Plan.

Oil sector growth, along recent activity across non-oil sectors, will signify pricing strategies, foreign investment and other domestically structured policies.

If external conditions remain favourable for reform, Oman will construct a modern economy less sensitive to international price instability.

The country’s investments in infrastructure, sustainable development, education and human capital are expected to strengthen.

The outlook for the year 2025 appears filled with a sense of hope. Oman is economically optimistic due to the steadily rising GDP, along with the ongoing policy reforms and the valuable contribution of non-oil sectors.

However, Oman still faces several challenges. The remaining uncertainties do not seem to bother the country.

Oman appears to be increasingly focused on strategy and is setting important building blocks for a better future, which is complex and diverse. While Oman continues to depend on oil, its relevance is no longer the defining feature.



QASIM AL MAASHANI

The writer is the head of business and politics section at Oman Observer

Oman’s shift from oil to green growth

In the span of a few weeks, Oman has announced projects that together sketch the outlines of a very deliberate strategy. A crude storage deal with Iraq, a gas pipeline expansion, new direct flights with Baghdad and the region’s first ship-recycling facility may seem like unrelated headlines. In truth, they are connected. They speak to Oman’s ability to balance tradition with innovation, energy with environment and regional diplomacy with global ambition.

The new 10-million-barrel crude storage project at Ras Markaz in Al Duqm, agreed with Iraq, is more than a technical deal. It is a statement. Oman is offering its geography

and neutrality as a service to its neighbours. By hosting Iraqi crude, the Sultanate of Oman gains fees, jobs and strategic leverage, while Iraq gains a secure export outlet outside the Strait of Hormuz.

This is Oman Vision 2040 in action. Rather than simply exporting oil, Oman is positioning itself as a logistics hub that manages flows of energy, not just production. It is a quieter, steadier form of influence — one rooted in trust and reliability.

At the same time, OQ Gas Networks is extending the national grid to 4,623 km by 2027. That figure may seem abstract,

but it carries real meaning. Each kilometre of pipeline is an artery delivering fuel to power plants, factories and new industrial zones. The lines from Fahud to Suhar and Ibri will knit the country’s energy map together, ensuring that the north’s industrial growth is supported by the interior’s resources.

This is not about gas alone. It is about creating the infrastructure that attracts investors. When companies see reliable supply, they are more likely to build plants, create jobs and take risks. In that sense, pipelines are promises — promises of stability and growth.

Then came the launch of Iraqi Airways’ Muscat service on September 6. A single route may not sound transformative, but direct flights change the pace of relations. They shorten business trips, open tourist corridors and allow families to connect. For Oman, Iraq represents a market of millions seeking leisure, culture and safe destinations. For Iraq, Oman is a partner offering access, not just diplomacy.

This matters. Regional connectivity is not built only in conference rooms. It is built in the boarding gates of airports, where the movement of people generates trust and opportunity.

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KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure the knowledge, the analysis and the synthesis of the market segment are accurate. Identifies the areas of lack of knowledge of the market, and with lucidity, take actions to fill these areas
- Responsible for the elaboration of the Development Strategy on this segment. Focuses on acquiring new clients and growing the business through strategic planning and execution
- Identifying new market opportunities, developing and implementing business development strategies, building and maintaining client relationships, and managing the integrated sales process
- Ensure the implementation of MSOP and the response to Invitation to Tenders
- Dealing with clients, managing, and monitoring of Facility management project(s)
- In regards of the marketing tools required for successful sales conclusion, he/she recommends and/or coordinates with the group resources for offer deployment and local market adjustments
- Ensure self-awareness of company QHSE policies & procedures and follow them

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Location: Muscat – Sultanate of Oman
Salary: Depending on experience and profile

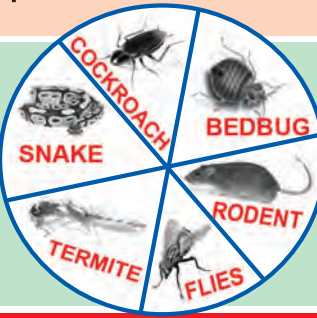
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ART/LIFE



A R T

THE WATERCOLOUR ART OF SALEM AL SALMI >20

ENTERTAINMENT

Busan film competition showcases Asian cinema’s ‘strength’



FOR THE first time, a full line-up of movies will compete at Busan’s International Film Festival, as it looks to celebrate “progressive” and “humane” regional cinema, the jury said on Thursday.

The 30th edition of Asia’s largest film festival is being revamped this year with a “historic” competition between 14 titles, including four from South Korea.

Previous editions have only seen small-scale competitions.

A seven-member jury, headed by South Korean filmmaker Na Hong-jin and featuring directors and actors from the region, will select the winners.

The entries — six by women filmmakers and five debut features — range from emerging talents to seasoned directors and explore themes including teenage pregnancy, infectious disease, media censorship and domestic violence.

The winning film will be screened as the festival’s closer.

“The world itself is going through a lot of crisis”, Indian actress-director and jury member Nandita Das told reporters on Thursday.

“I hope we will choose films that are progressive, that are humane, that bring the world closer”. Fellow member and “Pachinko” director Kogonada said he was “hungry for Asian sensibilities”. “There is some flavour of Asian cinema that is different and distinct”, he added.

It has taken around three decades for the festival to gain the “confidence” to launch a full-fledged competition, organisers said.

“For a festival to run a competition section, it needs the ability to attract films truly worthy of competing”, programme director Karen Park said.

“In the early years, we may not have had that confidence, but now I believe we do”. The lineup features Taiwanese megastar Shu Qi’s directorial debut, “Girl”, a coming-of-age drama about a young girl coping with abusive parents.

It also has acclaimed Sri Lankan filmmaker Vimukthi Jayasundara’s “Spying Stars”, which follows a scientist confronting a mysterious pandemic.

The four South Korean entries include Yoo Jae-in’s “En Route To”, about a high school girl who becomes pregnant after secretly dating her teacher. Another contender is Lim Sun-ae’s “Seven O’Clock Breakfast Club for the Brokenhearted”, which follows a support group for those reeling from painful breakups. — AFP

Q U I C K F E A T U R E S



BOLLYWOOD

Bollywood director Aryan Khan poses during the premiere of Netflix’s series ‘The Ba**ds of Bollywood’, in Mumbai. — AFP



MUSIC

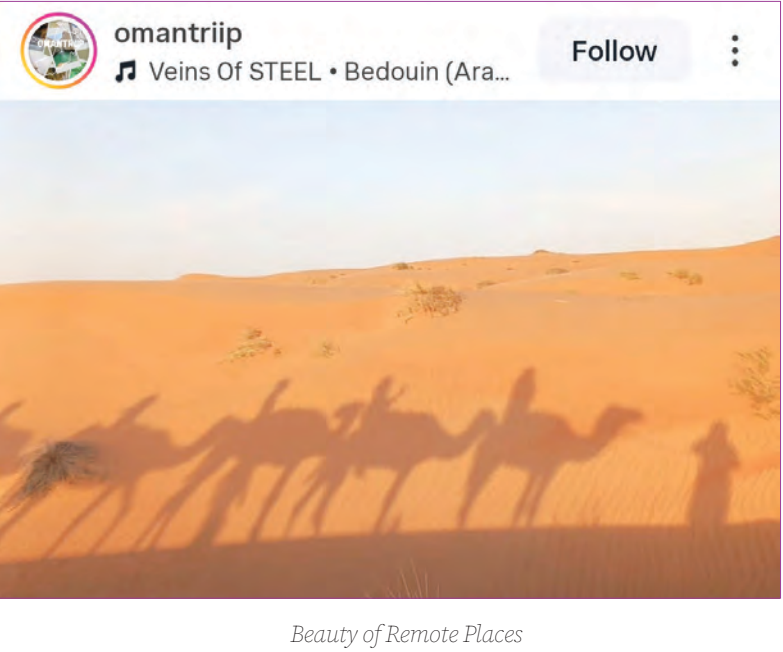
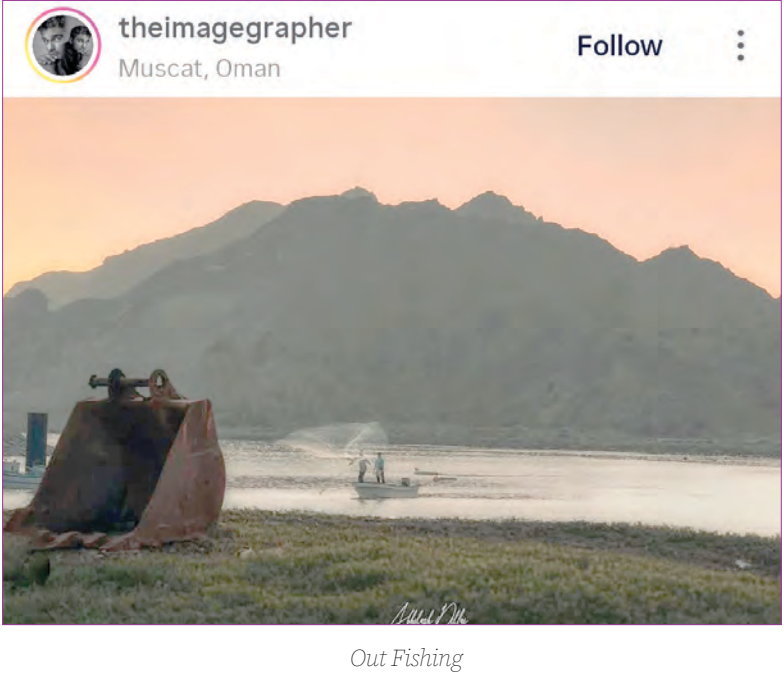
Rapper Cardi B announced she is expecting a child with her American football player boyfriend Stefon Diggs following weeks of rumors. — AFP



FASHION

The stainless steel Patek Philippe Ref 1518, manufactured in 1943, returns to Phillips at the Decade One auction in Geneva this November — a rare opportunity for collectors. — AFP

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Quadruple Star System
Is Found Right in Our
Cosmic Backyard



Zenghua Zhang, an astronomer at Nanjing University in China and his colleagues were combing through catalogs of stars in search of cold brown dwarfs, interstellar objects that fall somewhere between planets and stars. They found something odd and rare in the Milky Way. First, the astronomers identified what they believed was a lone brown dwarf orbiting a bright single star. Further investigation revealed that the brown dwarf was actually two. After submitting a paper about the discovery, Zhang said, they realised that the bright companion was a pair of stars, too. “I like to call this a double-double”, said Adam Burgasser,

an astrophysicist who leads the Cool Star Lab at the University of California, San Diego and was involved in the discovery. A study describing the quadruple star system — a brown dwarf dancing around another, locked in an orbit with two brighter stars also circling each other — was published by the Monthly Notices of Royal Astronomical Society this summer. The discovery will help scientists untangle the properties of brown dwarfs. These objects form like stars but have too little mass to consistently fuse hydrogen, a process that heats a star and makes it shine. Brown dwarfs have atmospheres similar to gas giant planets, like Jupiter or Saturn. — KATRINA MILLER/NYT



15 Unforgettable Looks
at the Emmy Awards



LAST WEEK, the 77th Emmy Awards took place at the Peacock Theatre in downtown Los Angeles under the shadow of heightened political violence in America. New security measures put in place for the event posed the question of whether the red carpet might look different this time around. The answer was not really. Though a few stars used the carpet as a political soapbox, it was mostly business as usual, with many plugging lighter fare like upcoming projects or details about their ensembles. There was plenty of traditional black-tie finery, but some dialed up the excitement in metallics or bright colours. A couple attendees sought attention by dressing down (in sleeveless tops and T-shirts) and a coterie of drag queens stood out by dressing like mimes and Michael Jackson (among other things). Of all the fashion at the Emmys, these 15 looks were some of the most memorable.

Lisa: Most Bubble Tape!
The train of the Blackpink singer and “White Lotus” actress’ sweet Lever Couture ensemble brought to mind the chewing gum sold in 6-foot-long strips.

Jenna Ortega: Most Bejeweled!
Wearing Givenchy by Sarah Burton,

the “Wednesday” actress put her own spin on the phrase “dripping with jewels”. Ruth Negga: Most Marbled Paper! The print on the “Presumed Innocent” actress’ Prada dress somewhat recalled the colourful swirls of the opulent stationery.

Pedro Pascal and Gwendoline Christie: Most ‘Victor/Victoria’! In complementary pale double-breasted suits, the actor, a star of “The Last of Us” (who wore Celine) and the “Severance” actress (wearing Tom Ford by Haider Ackermann) evoked the musical comedy’s his-and-hers wardrobes.

Carrie Coon: Most Tinkerbell!
Sporting a blond pixie cut and a fairylike Chanel dress, the “White Lotus” and “Gilded Age” actress seemed straight out of Neverland.

Noah Wyle: Most in Character!
Figs, a brand known best for its medical scrubs, made the tuxedo that the actor, a star of “The Pitt”, wore to the awards.

Sydney Sweeney Selena Gomez and Cristin Milioti: Most Red Necklines!
There were other red dresses at the Emmys, but the three actresses stood out in part for their distinctive necklines: heart-shaped for Sweeney (who wore Oscar de la Renta); high for Gomez, a star of “Only Murders in the Building” (who wore Louis Vuitton); and square for Milioti, a star of “The Penguin” (wearing

Danielle Frankel).

Megan Stalter: Most Sticker Shock!
The actress, a star of “Hacks” and “Too Much”, has made a habit of turning herself into a billboard on red carpets: She has worn a Diet Coke corset and has carried a bedazzled Dunkin’ coffee cup. At the Emmys, she accessorised her Hanes T-shirt and Levi’s jeans with a bag that had a big sticker with “cease fire” written on it.

Jeff Hiller: Most Park Avenue Prince!
Dressed in a pink brocade Dear Tyler suit with pearl trim, the actor, a star of “Somebody Somewhere”, channelled the uniforms of uptown ladies who lunch.

Natasha Rothwell: Most Deep Space!
The “White Lotus” actress’ dramatic Ines Di Santo ballgown had the dark, sweeping vastness of the place beyond Earth’s atmosphere.

Walton Goggins: Most Wedding Singer!
Wearing a white Louis Vuitton jacket, a half buttoned shirt and disheveled hair, the “White Lotus” actor looked as if he had been working the dance floor at a reception before he hit the carpet.

Parker Posey: Most Wedding Cake!
Details that made the “White Lotus” actress’ Valentino gown resemble newlyweds’ dessert included a layered skirt trimmed in icing-like lace. — NYT

FEATURES



THE WATERCOLOUR ART OF SALEM AL SALMI

BY SIHAM AL SAIDI

IN THE shifting landscape of Oman’s cultural renaissance, Salem al Salmi’s paintings stand out not only for their vibrant imagery but for their layered symbolism — images that challenge the conventions of landscape art and reflect a nation in transformation.

His works depict villages and houses that seem to lift from the earth, soaring skyward instead of remaining anchored in tradition. Such compositions are more than creative reveries; they embody a vision of progress, resilience and a break from static notions of heritage.

Al Salmi’s journey as an artist has been defined by a desire to depict change, not just in Oman but in the way art can communicate national aspirations.

Recognised internationally through memberships with the International Watercolour Society and Italy’s esteemed Fabriano Watercolour Association, he draws inspiration from global currents while maintaining a distinctly local narrative.

His art’s bold use of perspective, paired with striking contrasts in colour, sets his work apart within the broader context of contemporary watercolour painting.

Much of his influence can be traced to international styles that blend the figurative with the abstract, the traditional with the experimental.



Artists across Europe and Asia have long explored similar themes — landscapes reimagined through dynamic compositions and intense colour palettes. Notably, the works of the Italian master Giuseppe Penone, who explores natural growth and transformation within a modernist framework, bear conceptual parallels. Like Penone, Al Salmi’s floating structures evoke a sense of metamorphosis, an ongoing dialogue between permanence and change.

But what makes Al Salmi distinct is his grounding focus on cultural identity and environmental harmony. His roots in a traditional village, surrounded by mountains and palm groves, inform a sensitivity to landscape that is both personal and universal. His series Memory of Generations takes this sense of rootedness and elevates it, literally and figuratively. Houses drift skyward, villages sway in the breeze and colours pulsate, creating a realm that feels familiar yet unmoored from reality. These representations challenge the viewer to reconsider notions of heritage — not as a fixed inheritance but as a living, breathing entity that evolves with time.

His approach also diverges from Western modernism by emphasising the importance of cultural continuity. While many contemporary artists explore urbanisation and globalisation through abstract forms, Al Salmi employs a vivid, accessible visual language that bridges tradition and innovation. His use of geometry, bold perspectives and colour contrasts evoke a sense of movement and energy that underscores his belief that art must hold a message of hope.

Al Salmi’s work shares affinities with artistic currents such as Japanese nihonga, which combines traditional techniques with modern sensibilities and with the vibrant colour staging of Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera — yet his method remains uniquely his own. Instead of focusing solely on social or political themes, he channels a broader sense of collective resilience, linking individual memories to national renewal.

This is reflected in his international exhibitions, where his images have resonated in diverse contexts — from the Natural History Museum in the UK to the Tokyo University art spaces and in Russia, Italy, Tunisia, Jordan and beyond. His paintings reside in several institutional collections, including the World Trade Organisation in Geneva, symbolising his role as an ambassador of Oman’s evolving identity.

Far from seeing art as merely a reflection of aesthetics, Al Salmi views it as a vehicle for



communication. His inclusion in Oman’s school curricula exemplifies this ethos. “It’s important for students to see their own culture reflected in art”, he remarks. “When they do, it’s easier to understand their roots, their history and their future”. The response from students has been enthusiastic; many have recreated his work, inspired by the dreamlike quality that bridges past and future.

In an era where art often distills social commentary into fleeting trends, Al Salmi’s focus on sustainability and cultural preservation offers a different perspective. His paintings often depict structures that suggest eco-consciousness, hinting at themes of sustainable development and harmony with nature. The movement within his compositions implies progress — an ongoing process rooted in tradition but open to innovation.

His participation in the wider world reflects an understanding that contemporary art is not simply about localisation but exchange. Exhibiting from Qatar to the United Kingdom, from Italy to Japan, he engages in dialogues that transcend geography, yet always keeps a firm eye on Oman’s narrative. His most recent showing at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in Geneva, titled “Oman’s Message to the World”, exemplifies this. The work conveys kinetic energy and continuity, encapsulating a message of openness and renewal — core themes of Oman’s vision for its future.

The international reception of his work highlights his unique position. Unlike many artists who may excel in a specific style or thematic niche, Al Salmi combines technical mastery with cultural storytelling. His participation in global exhibitions not only elevates Oman’s presence in the arts but also pushes audiences to reimagine what cultural identity can look like in a rapidly changing world. His work’s resonance extends beyond the art community — it’s an active contribution to the dialogue about sustainable development, cultural preservation and the role of art in shaping nations.

Looking ahead, Al Salmi remains committed to this mission. His ongoing projects involve exploring further themes of environmental sustainability and urban innovation. He seeks to challenge the perception that modernity entails abandoning tradition; instead, he advocates that true innovation respects roots while forging new paths. His art exemplifies this balance, offering a vision that is both rooted in history and infused with hope.